

"GREEN FIELDS AND WHISPERING WOODS."

GREEN FIELDS

and
WHISPERING WOODS;

OR
The Recreations of an American "Country Gentleman";

Embracing Journeys over his Farm and Excursions
into his Library.

BY
FRANK S. BURTON.

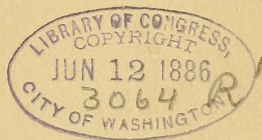
RICHLY ILLUSTRATED.

"When I travelled I saw many things."—[Ecclesiastical.

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To
My Aged Father,
The Manliest Man I Have Known,
This Book
Is Affectionately and Reverently
Dedicated,
by
THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.



THE chapters which follow in this volume make up a composition which some will be disposed to denominate a prose idyl. And yet, as we must agree, the work differs at points from an idyl. It may be termed an autobiography; but it is much more than that, much more and much less. It is a history, and yet not a history; and, for one difference, this discourse is too veracious, too faithful for history! Strictly speaking, this is not a sermon—a lay sermon—though it appears certain that it contains features which would not discountenance a homily of that species. Perhaps we were not so far astray to call it a great psalm, of several divisions; or a book of psalms; or a parable; or a series of parables. It is in no sense a novel, or work of fiction which may bear that title; it is far too true for that, even in those parts which treat of matters that really never occurred in manner and form as here set down. If a name must be fixed upon, what objection to calling this writing a poem? A poem, unmetrical; no less unsymmetrical; unrhymed; but possibly not unrhythmical. (Not an epic, then, an *Agricoliad*?) A didactic poem, because one of its offices is to teach moral lessons; but it is greatly unlike all other didactic poems the world has seen, or shall see. If properly

a dramatic piece, not a tragedy, 'tis too pleasant ; nor a comedy, 'tis too earnest in purpose. Happy if it be an oratorio. Why not, then, a hymn, a sacred lyric to Pan and all the rural gods—*i. e.*, to *all* the gods ? And it will displease the author not a whit though the quest for a fitting title for the book eventuates in total failure, if only its readers—or even a few of them—shall be brought to confess, amid smiles and tears, that

“ It has an excellence
That wants a name yet.”

F. S. B.

Detroit, Mich., April 15, 1886.



GENERAL MOTTOES.

"Story? God bless you! I have none to tell, sir!"

CANNING: *The Knife Grinder.*

"This is the discourse of an honorable philosopher, and not the discourse of a poet."

Koran.

"Fan Ch'e requested to be taught husbandry. The master said, 'I am not so good for that as an old husbandman'. He requested to be taught gardening, and was answered, 'I am not so good for that as an old gardener'."

CONFUCIUS.

"Books can and do penetrate into every nook of our most extended and crowded cities; but every day these cities and towns enlarge their boundaries, and the sweet face of Nature is hidden from the inhabitants. We should, therefore, not only make our books breathe into the depth of every street, court and alley the natural aliment of human hearts—the love of Nature—but rouse them like a trumpet, to get out at times and renew that animating fellowship which God designed to be maintained between the soul of man and the beauty of the universe."

HOWITT: *Book of the Seasons.*

"This book will make a traveller of thee,
If by its counsels thou wilt ruled be;
It will direct thee to the holy land
If thou wilt its directions understand;
Yea, it will make the slothful active be,
The blind also delightful things to see."

BUNYAN: *Pilgrim's Progress.*

"Reject it not, although it bring
Appearances of some fantastic thing
At first unfolding."

WITTER: *To the King.*



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MOTTOES FOR THE INTRODUCTION.

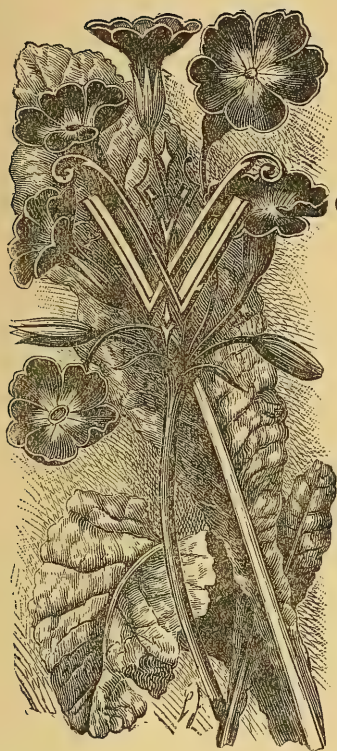


"The world is too much with us ; late and soon,
Getting and spending we lay waste our powers ;
Little we see in nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
The sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are upgathered now like sleeping flowers,—
For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;
It moves us not.—Great God ! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn,—
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn,
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

WORDSWORTH.

"While such pure joys my bliss create,
Who but would smile at guilty state ?
Who but would wish his holy lot
In calm oblivion's humble grot ?
Who but would cast his pomp away,
To take my staff and amice gray ;
And to the world's tumultuous stage
Prefer the blameless hermitage ?"

THOMAS WARTON.



INTRODUCTION.

WORTHY reader, I have determined at the outset, if only you will promise to be very discreet, and not divulge the secret, to make a confidant of you: The author of this book is really not much of a Farmer, after all. If then you turn upon me and demand how I have dared to assume the name, as in the sub-title of this work I so plainly do, I have simply to urge that I make up in the *recreating* part what I lack in the other. That is to say, while in a qualified sense only am I an agriculturist, and not heart-whole as a cultivator of the soil, I am an entirely sincere and earnest believer in and advocate of the universal culture of the soul; and, although sometimes I have been reproached by my more practical rural neighbors with being a "book-farmer," I am rather, by instinct and aspiration, a *Brook-Farmer*.

But, it will be objected, the Brook-Farmers were dreamers, builders of tinselled air-castles, whose fairy fabrics, with gossamer-raftered roofs, sunshine-shingled, only touched earth at a single point, and hence could not stand. Very well then, I am a dreamer; and would go on and try the

pretty experiment over again, but in modified forms perhaps, and over again and again, until either some way is devised of making the Castle Beautiful maintain its proper erect position, or the pleasure of trying them shall compensate a thousand-fold for all the attendant labor and expense of the successive essays.

How noble the following language of the author of the *Blithedale Romance*:

"Yet, after all," he says, "let us acknowledge it wiser, if not more sagacious, to follow out one's day-dream to its natural consummation, although, if the vision have been worth the having, it is certain never to be consummated otherwise than by a failure. But what of that? Its airiest fragments, impalpable as they may be, will possess a value that lurks not in the most ponderous realities of any practicable scheme! They are not the rubbish of the mind. Whatever else I may repent of, therefore, let it be reckoned neither among my sins or follies that I once had faith enough to form generous hopes of the world's destiny!"*

Without sharing in the despondency of this noble spirit, reader, let us adopt, as our platform of principles, the remarkable words of his conclusion.

"I'm sadder now,—I have had cause; but oh, I'm proud to think
That each pure joy-fount loved of yore I yet delight to drink!
Leaf, blossom, blade, hill, valley, stream, the clear unclouded sky,
Still mingle music in my dreams as in the days gone by."†

To me the human soul is the most beautiful, the most valuable, the most sacred thing under the whole Heaven! its culture the business for us the most worthy, the most important, the most imperatively necessary! Nay, of such tremendous and transcendent consequence is this work of the development of the intellectual and moral nature of the

*HAWTHORNE.

†WILLIAM MOTHERWELL.

human, that, neglecting this, all other enterprises appear trivial,—of little value or avail.

“By words

Which speak of nothing more than what we are
 Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
 Of death, and win the vacant and the vain
 To noble raptures, while my voice proclaims
 How exquisitely the individual mind
 (And the progressive powers perhaps no less
 Of the whole species) to the external world
 Is fitted:—and how exquisitely, too,
 (Theme this but little heard of among men)
 The external world is fitted to the mind;
 And the creation (by no lesser name
 Can it be called) which they with blended might
 Accomplish:—This is our high argument.”*

I am not unaware that by my method of reaching my object in the present work, I may incur the criticism of many and the hostility of a few; and I have little defense to make. I confess that in this volume I have touched upon a variety of subjects, many of which may appear to bear little relation to the general purpose of the work, wherein I have possibly offended equally against the rules of rhetoric and the canons of good taste. Of much that I have said it may be urged, as was objected against Thoreau's *Walden*, that it might have been as well written elsewhere or on another theme.† “I acknowledge it all”—the discursiveness—levity—egotism—all: “’tis partly affected.”‡ But if one shall rise and charge that my work hence is lacking either in sincerity or dignity, or that its lesson merits hence less attention, I desire to enter an indignant protest, and challenge him to his proofs!

I am mindful, too,—and if memory should fail me at any season, three several times at least each day would nature

*WORDSWORTH: *Excursion*.

†SANBORN'S *Life of Thoreau*.

‡BURTON: *Anat. of Mel.*

quicken it,—that we must also attend to the “question of bread and butter.” The author of *Lucile—and he a poet*—declares :

“We may live without poetry, music and art;
We may live without conscience, and live without heart;
We may live without friends, we may live without books;
But civilized man cannot live without cooks.”

I repeat we must not ignore the practical question of “making a living”;—and if I have sometimes dreamed of the possibility of the return of the Golden Age, and deplored the manners of this age of gold, let it not be laid to my charge that I have failed in my theories of life to take into account the necessity of exertion to win a decent support for the physical part of this wonderful human animal, or that I decry, or deny the dignity of, the labor devoted to this end! “Venerable to me is the hard hand,—crooked, coarse,—wherein, notwithstanding, lies a cunning virtue, indispensably royal, as of the scepter of the planet.”* But I would fain believe it practicable still, in Dr. Ripley’s words, “to establish a mode of life combining the enchantments of poetry with the facts of daily experience.”

“Paradise and groves

Elysian, Fortunate Fields,—like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic main,—why should these be
A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was?
For the discerning intellect of man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
The simple produce of the common day.”†

But although a perusal of the following pages may fail perchance to arm the reader with a full equipment of logical arguments, wherewith to maintain the position which

*CARLYLE. †WORDSWORTH.

both himself and the author now so clearly occupy, and so tenaciously cling to, logic or no logic, yet a shadowy glimpse of the line of defense which I deem might by a more forcible genius be made effective, may be thus obtained. At all events some pleasant reading may possibly be found between the covers of this book, and useful meanings extracted thence,—meanings, however, which in some instances may not be obvious to the careless reader.

Will you accompany me, dear reader, upon these my “journeys” and my “excursions”?

“Beauty, a living presence of the earth,
Surpassing the most fair ideal forms,
Which craft of delicate spirits doth compose
From earth’s materials, waits upon my steps;
Pitches her tents before me as I move,
An hourly neighbor.”

If I have successfully accomplished my purpose in preparing the following chapters, the sympathizing reader shall yet experience something of the delight the author has felt while the work has been in progress.

“Fit audience let me find, though few.”



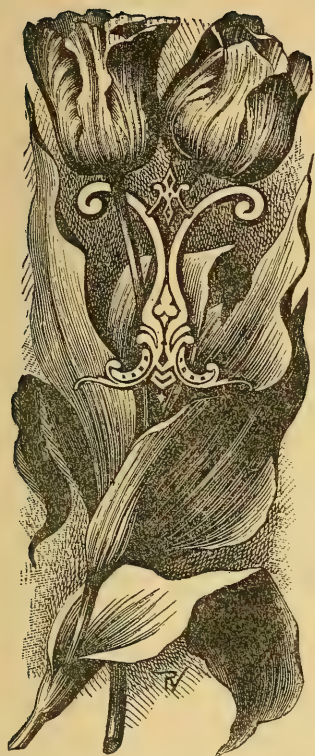
MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER I.

"Nay, if you come to that, sir, have not the wisest men of all ages, not excepting Solomon himself,—have they not all had their hobby horses ;—their running horses, their coins and their cockle shells, their drums and their trumpets, their fiddles and their pallets, their maggots and their butterflies? And so long as a man rides his hobby horse peaceably and quietly along the king's highway, and neither compels you nor me to get up behind him—pray, sir, what have either you or I to do with it?"

LAURENCE STERNE.

"The setting or the rising sun, being mere matter, are in themselves nothing, unless they are clothed in light by the imagination, unless the east and the west are irradiated by poetry."

PROF. WILSON.



CHAPTER I.

IS of no use, little woman, to fight against fate: I must have a farm,—must be a farmer!"

We—three of us—were cosily seated in our little room, answering the general purpose of dining-, sitting- and reading-room, in our snug dwelling in the village of M. The boys who worked at the printing office, and boarded with us, had finished their dinner and quietly withdrawn; the ladies lingered, chatting, at the table, while the speaker, reclining at ease upon a chintz-covered sofa, nearer the coal-stove, had been for some time buried in a volume of essays, and he gave utterance to the abrupt exclamation which we note above, without raising his eyes from the variegated page of Christopher North.

But, although he had not looked, he was fully conscious of the sudden birth of roguish and quizzical smiles which forthwith began wreathing two sweet faces opposite, and was fully prepared for a question—asked not now for the first time by the same gentle voice on similar provocation:

"What have you found now?"

The reader was conscious, with still downcast eyes, of a quick exchange of significant glances between his fair companions.

A little abashed, because his exclamation had been rather an involuntary one, and yet with more of hardihood than a perfect stranger would have anticipated from him under all the circumstances of the case, yea, with more than would have supported him at an earlier day of his sinning in this kind, the reader raised his eyes from the book till they met the smiling orbs of his interlocutor and her co-conspirator in turn, burst into a good-humored laugh, and replied:

"Oh, 'tis nothing, much, *here*; only the thoughts this paragraph suggested."

But they insisted on hearing it, and I was forced to read:

"'Scotland bought and read his poetry, and Burns, from a poor man, became rich—rich to his heart's desire—and reached the summit of his ambition in the way of this world's life in a—farm!'"

Then both ladies laughed merrily, but with such a sympathetic light in their mild eyes as took the sting all out of the rebuke and made me fain to join them. Then one steals over to the sofa and, laying a soft hand on that of the dreamer, looks directly into his eyes. It is Beecher, I think, who avers that there are women able "to look a whole arithmetic" in one glance at their bibliomaniac husbands. What else did I see in the gentle eyes turned upon me at this moment? I saw, indeed, the mathematics of the problem duly arrayed against me. I saw prudent admonition, kindly remonstrance. I saw—slowly gathering—a tear!

"Our poet idealizes the life of the farmer," was the remark of Mignon from the table. "That probably isn't very wrong; but the prosaic matters of bread and butter

must also be attended to, I suppose," she added. And further: "I myself would like to perceive,

‘Through all familiar things,
The romance underlying.’”*

The dreamer looked his thanks to both his sympathetic opposers and thus spoke:

“Yes, and you remember Bryant’s lines:

“‘The sweet sounds of the vernal season,
And the fair sights of its early days,
Are only sweet when we fondly listen,
And only fair when we fondly gaze.

“‘There is no glory in star or blossom
Till looked upon by a loving eye;
There is no fragrance in April breezes
Till breathed with joy as they wander by,’

“And,” he continued, “Coleridge says,

‘We receive but what we give,
And in our life alone doth nature live.’”

“But what does all that prove?” interrupted the little lady by my side, “that poetry liberally scattered will produce potatoes, and sufficiency of sentiment sown is certain to secure heavy crops of cereals?”

“No,” responded Mignon, “the old problem of ‘bread and butter’ remains as before. True, I have read (in Shelley, I believe) that while

‘Chameleons live on light and air,
The poet’s food is love and fame!’

So *he’d* do well enough, and, selfish man that he is! he seems to be looking out only for himself. But that sort of provision wouldn’t do at all for you, Malvina,—and the little ones; you must have something far more substantial.”

*WHITTIER.

Then we all laughed gaily and the session broke up, no progress having been made in any direction.

The above is only one of many conversations which took place in the same little room upon similar subjects, and in these odd triangles of debate the obtuser angle was always directly opposed by two others (*non Angli, sed Angeli*) so acute that the wonder was he did not give up the unequal contest.* But not he!

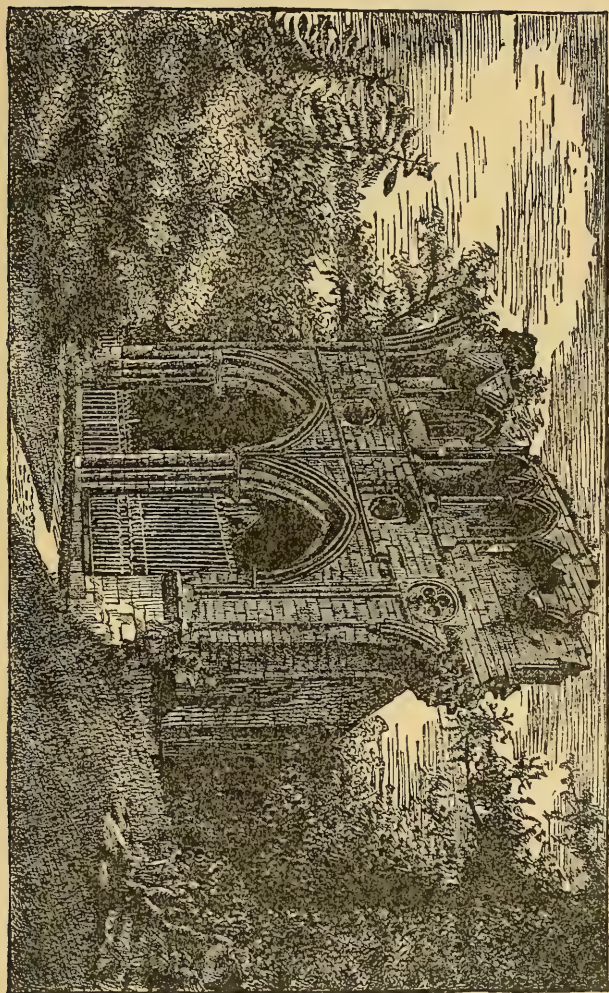
One day I took down a book, both ladies being at hand, and read aloud as follows:

"There is something in *the owning* of a piece of ground which affects me as did the old ruins of England. I am free to confess that the value of a farm is not chiefly in its crops of cereal grain, its orchards of fruit, and its herds; but in those larger and more easily reaped harvests of associations, fancies and dreamy brooding which it begets. From boyhood I have associated classical civil virtues and old heroic integrity with the soil. No one who has peopled his young brain with the fancies of Grecian Mythology but comes to feel a certain magical sanctity for the earth."

When the reader began, although he carefully kept his eyes upon the book, he was conscious of the usual mutual glances and smiles on the part of his two fair companions, and felt a little disconcerted: he managed, however, to keep his countenance, and when he saw, as he furtively cast his eyes about, during his progress down the page, that the

*I am a little dubious concerning this *mathematical figure*. If that obtuser angle was *right*, as he evidently believed himself, then how could the contest be said to be *unequal*? A question this for students of geometry. If the o. a. were greater than a right angle (more than right!) the inequality of the two forces must be conceded, 'tis true, but it would count in favor of the o. a. But the others would gain in acuteness as the larger angle grew more obtuse. If the *obtuser angle* were less than right, he then were at a double disadvantage: he would lack both in size and sharpness.

OLD RUINS OF ENGLAND.



ladies were lending attentive ears, and, in fact, growing more and more interested in the beautiful sentences, his courage rose and he concluded the paragraph with an elocutionary flourish which betrayed him again.

"That's very fine," observed Mignon, dryly.

"Who wrote that?" demanded she whom her companion had addressed as Malvina.

"Brother Beecher," I replied.

"I thought so!" was the response, and then she asked: "How many thousand dollars a year does Mr. Beecher's farm cost him?"

"Only some ten or twelve, I have heard," laughed Mignon. "A mere trifle," she added, sarcastically. Then she remarked: "But I do think what was read is beautiful."

"So do I," asserted Malvina, "and it is a great and glorious gift that enables men to write thus."

I was now gathering new courage, thinking I had made an impression upon the minds of the ladies. I re-read to attentive and appreciative listeners what I conceived to be the finest lines in the paragraph, and then walking over to the book-case, I opened the glass door, put up the *Star Papers* and, taking down *Whittier*, which opened at a mark, and standing by the book-case, and prefacing the verse with a "Thank the Lord that ours is," which was not in the book, I read as follows:

" 'A land
Where whoso wisely wills and acts may dwell
As king and law-giver in broad-acred state,
With beauty, art, taste, culture, books, to make
His hour of leisure richer than a life
Of four-score to the baron of old time.
Our yeoman should be equal to his home
Set in the fair green valleys.' " *

Then, quickly, lest something *mal-a-propos* might be said, "Is that picture not a beautiful one,

*Prelude to *Among the Hills*.



‘His home
Set in the fair green valleys’?”

I demanded.

The ladies proved, as I had been fearful all the time they would do, far too keen to be caught with this jugglery, and the ludicrous side of it all being most apparent to them, two simultaneous peals of silvery laughter was all the reply vouchsafed to my question. I put the book back in the case, slammed the door, caught my hat and overcoat from the rack in the hall, flung them on, passed out of the hall door, slamming that after me, muttering Goldsmith’s line as I went:

“‘The loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind.’”

No progress made as yet.

But did I think of yielding? Never!

I still had faith also in the power of pastoral literature to convince other minds, feeling what influence its imagery possessed over myself.

I sought likewise to draw here a lesson from history. I remembered the ancient duel between the three Roman brothers Horatii and the Alban triplets Curatii, which decided the fate of the two nations, and how, with his two brothers slain, the surviving Roman youth was confronted by his three antagonists, who, although each was wounded, together constituted fearful odds against the single champion, and how the latter turned and fled while terrible groans were wrung from his kindred, for they saw sealed in his defeat their own ignominious slavery. But it was only a ruse of the brave young soldier to effect the separation of his opponents who pursued him with differing rates of speed, and whom, thus divided, he turned and faced, and conquered, overcoming easily *seriatim* forces which, combined, he never could have successfully encountered. I must meet and convince my adversaries separately.

I knew that Emerson was the favorite author of Mignon. Nay, I knew that his every sentence appeared to her almost as if inspired. I concocted a scheme of attack upon her with all the circumstance and deliberation "My Uncle Toby" was wont to use in planning one of his sieges, and when the conditions all were right, one day, I proceeded to put my plan into execution.

I contrived it so, when left alone with her and when I knew she would importune me to read something aloud, to have a volume of the Concord sage's essays in my hand. As was her custom, she requested me to make a selection, and I turned to that beautiful and thoughtful paper, *The Farmer*. I *felt* rather than saw her smile as I began; but she spoke not and appeared to grow more rapt as I proceeded, and the Emersonian pearls continued to drop from my lips, one by one:

“The glory of the farmer is that, in the division of labor, it is his part to create.

“He stands close to nature, * * the good which was not he causeth to be.

“And the profession has in all eyes its ancient charm, as standing nearest to God, the first cause.

“Then the beauty of nature, the tranquility and innocence of the countryman, his independence and his pleasing arts, the care of bees, of poultry, of sheep, of cows, the dairy, the care of hay, of fruits, of orchards and forests, and the reaction of these on the workman in giving him a strength and plain dignity, all men acknowledge.’”

A sound as of smothered laughter caused me to look up quickly. What did my eyes behold! Mignon had thrown herself back in her chair and, having nearly suffocated herself in her attempts to check her mirth, was now holding her handkerchief to her mouth, while, with eyes brimming with tears, she was gazing at me with a curiously mingled look of shame, apprehension and amusement.

Of course I was disgusted and deeply offended, and didn't in the least exert myself to conceal my feelings. Then, by a powerful effort, she calmed herself, and coming over to me with a very penitent expression of countenance, begged me not to be angry with her for her extreme rudeness, and to forgive her; and then, without giving me time to make a decision either way, she burst into another fit of laughter which proved so contagious that I was forced to join her, and having thus succeeded in working me into the semblance, at least, of better humor, she inquired if I could guess what had caused her merriment.

“No,” said I, with returning savageness, “I can't, for the life of me, see anything to laugh at.”

“Do you wish me to tell you?”

I did feel a little curiosity on the subject, and was obliged to confess so much.

"Well," Mignon began, "in the first place, I couldn't help seeing that you were carrying out the details of a deeply laid plot against me, and that amused me highly, and more particularly when I observed what a grave, even solemn face and innocent air you maintained, and with what *an unction* you pronounced some of those *sweet lines*. Then toward the last I was reminded, I don't know how, of some verses of another author on a similar theme. Would you like to hear them? They are by Willis."

I assented with a poor grace, which moved her risibles again; but recovering her self-control, for she saw I was in danger of getting very angry again, she struck an attitude, and in a melo-dramatic tone declaimed :

" ' Your love in a cottage is hungry;
Your vine is a nest for flies;
Your milk-maid shocks the graces,
And simplicity talks of pies!
You lie down to your shady slumber,
And awake with a bug in your ear;
Your damsel that walks in the morning
Is shod like a mountaineer.' "

Now I submit to a candid world that the obduracy of the two ladies of my household so far as my pet theory was concerned, was very provoking to say the least; and I entertain no manner of doubt but the verdict of the intelligent reader of these pages will be that the conduct of Mignon upon the particular occasion I have just described, was reprehensible in the extreme, and that I had good reason to feel very deeply hurt. I felt so. Nay, my soul was full of bitterness toward the lady, and, although while she was at her antics with that wretched doggerel of Willis'

"To be grave exceeded all power of face,"

and I may have *grinned*, like Milton's Death,

"Horribly, a ghastly smile,"

I hated myself for it, and as soon as I could, in parliamentary phrase, get the floor, I spoke :

"Now, Katie," said I, (I called her Katie when I desired to be terribly sarcastic,—meant, in fact, as she herself was accustomed to put it, to quite crush her), "Now, Katie, I should think, after that exhibition, you would never pretend to a serious thought again ! I had supposed you appreciated Emerson's best things."

Judge of my amazement when I perceived that my favorite bolt had fallen innocuous !

Tears, indeed, coursed down the cheeks of the provoking girl ; but they had not their source in woe. "Why," replied she, still struggling with her mirth, "I do ; and I like that essay you have just been reading very much — have long admired it ; and I fully agree with the author in what he says near the close of that very paper (which, by the way, you have never read, I guess) that "we must not paint the farmer in rose-color." I knew you were in danger of doing —"

She was saying something more, but I was too much agitated then to enjoy further literary conversation. I flung the volume I had been reading from, under the sofa, snatched my hat from the table, and was rushing madly through the door, out into the cold world, when I was caught in the arms of Malvina, returning at the setting of the sun, fresh and cheery, from a walk, and borne in triumph back into the room.

We three passed a delightful evening together. The ladies related (for the seventy-ninth time) certain stories of life at a distant health institute where they, for some months, a short time previously, had together resided, and I, as soon as possible, sang myself to sleep upon the sofa.

I entertain little doubt but that my hobby, at times, became an exceedingly wearisome thing to the ladies, for I

imagine that in my zeal I sometimes forgot the golden rule regarding the management of these pets, hinted at in the motto from Sterne which heads this unconscionably lengthy chapter. Howbeit, I remember making one more literary attack upon them, which was seemingly attended with a little better success than any of my previous ones. About this time both ladies were much interested in reading of the famous Brook Farm experiment of by-gone times. Their sympathies had always dwelt with the originators of that enterprise, whose ultimate failure they deplored. I read aloud, on one occasion, from a then recently published biographical work the following extract (elsewhere quoted) from a letter relating to the farm, which was written by the Rev. George Ripley to a friend:

“We are striving to establish a mode of life which shall combine the enchantments of poetry with the facts of daily experience.”

That was probably the best card I had ever played in my little game with the ladies. It was indeed a *trump*.

Both of my arch-enemies became thoughtful of a sudden, and remained silent for the space of half an hour. I felt that at length the heaven was working,—yea, that the bread I had been liberally casting upon the waters for so many days, was at length about to be found, and, as Hosea Biglow vulgarly expresses the thought,

“Buttered, tu, for sartin.”

I waited almost breathlessly for “a sign.” Suddenly Mignon, heaving a deep sigh, and turning to her accomplice, exclaimed: “Why can’t we make a Brook Farm of Oakfields, Malvina?”

“I have been thinking of that lately,” asserted the little lady addressed.

I had conquered!

Oakfields was the name I had adopted for the new and wild tract of land lying some miles to the northward, which I had recently purchased, and was even at that time burning to occupy, subdue, and develop into a farm.



MOTTO FOR CHAPTER II.



“And musing on the tale I heard,
’Twere well, thought I, if often
To rugged farm-life came the gift
To harmonize and soften;

“If more and more we found the truth
Of fact and fancy plighted,
And culture’s charm, and labor’s strength
In rural homes united.

“The simple life, the homely health,
With beauty’s sphere surrounding;
And blessing toil, where toil abounds,
With graces more abounding.”

WHITTIER.



CHAPTER II.

THE kind but conceited reader of this most veracious history should not for one moment deem that he has now mastered the whole mystery of my success in convincing the ladies of my household of the sanity of the views I held with regard to the farm, and in winning their consent to make the much longed-for experiment.

“The half can ne’er be told.”

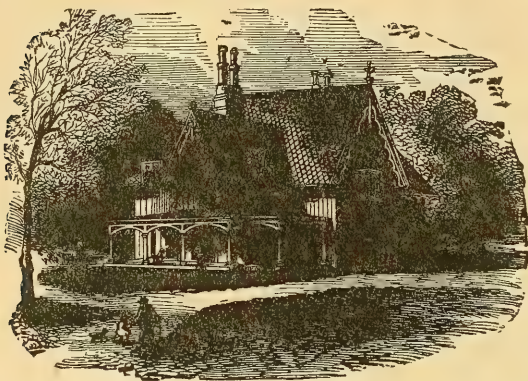
I have in the preceding chapter said never a word of long discussions of the important question with Malvina upon

our rides and walks, when no ear heard, no eye beheld us, we two alone under the smiling sun, or

“Looked at by the silent stars.”

In these “high debates” I sometimes grew passionate and rhetorical; she always remained gentle but firm: the impetuous flood of eloquence, as the tide of a strong river flowing against a solid, verdure-cushioned bank, beat against her unyielding but reason-controlled will ineffectually.

I drew pictures for her of a tree-embowered cottage remote from the dusty highway, with broad verandah vine-entwined,



conservatory, verdant lawns with walks flower-bordered, sinuous and shady drives, rustic seats in leafy nooks, the whole surrounded by broad green

fields of waving grain and grass, with pastures where cows grazed, colts frolicked and young lambs gambolled. And mindful that

“Not rural sights alone, but rural sounds
Exhilarate the spirit,”

I spoke of the mingled voices of the country home, beginning with

“The breezy call of incense-breathing morn;
The swallows, twittering in the straw-built shed;
The cock’s shrill clarion,”

and dwelling upon the neighing of horses, the bleating of the tender lambkins, the songs of wild birds in the orchard and the woods, — “the real woods which man never planted nor pruned,” as Beecher’s description is,—the murmuring of all insects, and in particular the music of

“That flying harp, the honey bee;”

the sweet sound in the shrubbery through the open window of “morn’s fragrant breath,” and of

“Summer evening’s latest sigh
That shuts the rose,”

and the sweeping of the brisker wind among the forest trees; then the soothing music made by the "patter of the rain," I would mention;—claiming as I always did and do, that all these things could nowhere be so satisfactorily experienced, so fully enjoyed as in the country.

Then would I expatiate upon the blessings of pure sweet water and uncontaminated air, of the more delicious than "Sabeian odors," wafted from fields of blooming clover, of fresh milk and honey that the village market knows not of, of a free and unconventional mode of life, segregated from strife and gossip,—quietude, with leisure for reading and reflection, and a better chance for securing good company from the opportunity given by this mode of life for selection.

I have never doubted that my pictorial representations of rural life had their effect upon Malvina's mind, though perhaps they affected me more strongly than they did her, for during the time employed by me in drawing them she was studying arguments to be used against me. Neither let it be thought that she did not possess good, strong and cogent reasons wherewith to maintain her own position and assault mine; and they were many of them of a more practical character than some of those I advanced.

She argued that it would cost a fortune to develop the land I owned into a good farm, "and where is the fortune to come from," she asked. After speaking of the heavy labor of clearing off the forests she one day took up my hand, and regarding it pityingly she thus apostrophized it: "Poor, little, dainty *paw*! A pretty thing you'd be to wield an axe or a hand-spike!"

Then she deprecated the want of good society in the country generally, and in so new a section as that where the farm is situated in particular. There are many other privileges, too, she urged that could not be had so conveniently

even in a suburban home as in a town ; among these she enumerated libraries, lectures, the mails, etc.

All of which arguments, though prosaic in form and matter, possessed force, as I was obliged to acknowledge.

One day, in her reading, she ran across some lines of Tallyrand's which she brought and made me hear. They were from a report made to the French Institute by the wily old fox, a little after his return to his native country from his enforced sojourn upon our shores. These are a good deal out of the false prelate's ordinary vein, but are worth reading, even if they be so couched in parts as to convey an erroneous impression. The Frenchman wrote as follows :

"The American back-woodsman is interested in nothing ; every sentimental idea is banished from him ; those branches, so elegantly thrown by nature, a fine foliage, a brilliant hue which marks one part of the forest, a deeper green which darkens another,—all these are nothing in his eye ; he has no recollection associated with anything around ; his only thought is the number of strokes of his axe which are necessary to level this or that tree. He never planted ; he is a stranger to the pleasure of that process. Were he to plant a tree, it never could become an object of gratification to him, because he could not live to cut it down. He lives only to destroy.



He is surrounded by destruction. Hence every place is good for him. He does not love the field where he has expended his labor, because his labor is merely fatigue, and has no pleasurable sentiment attached to it. The work of his hands is not marked by the progressive circumstance of growth, so interest-

ing to the agriculturist. He does not watch the destiny of what he produces. He knows not the pleasures of new attempts, and in surrendering his home, if he does not leave his axe behind him, he leaves no regrets in the dwelling in which he may have passed years of his life."

"What do you think of that, oh, you would-be back-woodsman?" demanded Malvina, closing the book.

"I think," replied I, "that if the old diplomat designed in his report to describe our race of hireling lumbermen merely, he is not very far astray; but, on the other hand, if he meant to characterize our settlers,—pioneer farmers, I call 'em,—as being of that soulless class he describes, he is a foul slanderer!"

Then I took the book and read the lines over again. "He is a liar!" at length I ejaculated passionately. "He does mean our pioneer farmers, or else he is merely making guesses. We have no class of lumbermen who would answer all the requirements of this caricature." And I fell to reading again.

After a little further perusal of the printed page, and some reflection, I looked up again to my *vis-a-vis*, and said:

"I wish I had the power to write as that man (or his amanuensis) wrote;—*I'd* draw you a picture of our back-woodsmen which should possess the merit of being both true and beautiful. I have seen humble woodland homes, cosy and neat as the nests of birds, with taste in construction everywhere displayed, though the materials used were of the humblest and rudest, and which a glimpse of would have moved you, Malvina, or even old Tallyrand, to admiration!

"Our back-woodsmen are sometimes interested in their habitations,—in fact frequently possess most remarkably strong attachments to the homes they have created. They do plant trees, and vines, and flowers about their dwellings,



sometimes in such profusion that the poor little cabin is concealed, or becomes a bower of beauty! What does the old scamp want—”

“Tut, tut!” warned a gentle voice.

“All right, then,” responded I, “but I do declare unto you sincerely that if you could view some of the neat little rustic homes I have oftentimes observed upon our Michigan borders, you would appreciate —”

“Some more poetry,” she laughingly interrupted, holding up a deprecating finger.

“Just this once,” I pleaded, half rising and glancing wistfully toward the book-shelf whereon the “Household” poets

were ranged ; but she was inexorable, and the debate was at an end for that day.

During a later interview Malvina expressed the apprehension that there is something in farm-life, particularly in a comparatively new and undeveloped territory, that is inimical to the growth of what may be termed the graces of civilization. She feared, she said, that not only did such a life fail to afford nourishment therefor, but that it actually tended to discourage their development, so that progress would generally be backward rather than forward. She thought that the love of the beautiful, and the taste for mental improvement would fail of encouragement, the ambition for excellence in the accomplishments of music and painting, for example, would die out gradually, and the cultivation of the social amenities would be neglected from lack of incentive. Her early experience upon a farm had not left a favorable impression upon her mind, so far as these several matters were concerned, and her later observations had not resulted in re-assuring her.

I labored with all my might to convince her of what I with perfect honesty conceived to be her error in this regard. While I was driven to acknowledge that our farmer's homes were many of them painfully void of those features which are attractive to the generously cultivated mind, the wives and daughters therein, in many cases, too careless of those matters which tend to keep the refined humanities alive ; still, I argued, we do not fail to find as large a percentage of truly cultivated people among countrymen in proportion to the means — the wealth — possessed, as we find in civic populations. There is, I maintained, much less of ostentation and keeping up of appearances among farmers, and hence a careless or superficial observer might easily gain an erroneous impression. I remember on one occasion reading to her an extract from Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* to

prove the superior intelligence of the farming class in the old countries, which runs as follows :

"After what are called the fine arts, and the liberal professions, however, there is perhaps no trade which requires so great a variety of knowledge and experience [as the profession of agriculture]. The innumerable volumes which have been written upon it in all languages may satisfy us that among the wisest and most learned nations it has never been regarded as a matter very easily understood. And from all these volumes we shall in vain attempt to collect that knowledge which is commonly possessed even by the common farmer, how contemptuously soever the very contemptible authors of them may appear to speak of him." *

I further sought to show that the cultivated portion of the population of cities was largely recruited from the farm, to support which position I quoted Emerson, Greeley and Arnold.

I am hardly prepared to believe, however, that all my arguments in those protracted debates effected anything; but I became aware sometime ere the occurrence of the episode spoken of in the last chapter, wherein the extract from Mr. Ripley's letter played such a conspicuous part, that there had been a perceptible alteration in Malvina's views. I am not quite clear to this day as to what produced the change, but have always deemed that the perusal of a number of well-written works upon rural subjects, and especially the then recently published bee-keeper's manual, by my friend, Professor Cook, into which that genial and gifted author has put so much of his good heart, had

* Book 1, Chap. X. But XENOPHON says [*Æcon*] that "anyone can be a farmer, as no art or skill is requisite; all consists in industry and in attention to the execution." "A strong proof," says COLUMELLA, in turn, "that agriculture was little developed in the time of the Greek." But there appear to be many in this day who believe as did the author of the *Anabasis*.

more or less to do therewith. Greatly rejoicing that at length we were all to be at one upon the question of the farm, I did not seek to pry too closely into the causes which had produced the happy result. I encouraged Malvina's love for bees, and taste for bee-literature, and she in turn listened with patience to all my pastoral rhapsodies, and life was passing very pleasantly.

One serious drawback to our happiness, however, about this time was that we were deprived of the society of Mignon, one of the brightest, purest and kindest of women, whom, though not a relative, we both loved and esteemed as a dear sister. Circumstances took her from our fireside, and we have mourned her as a sweet influence departed.



MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER III.



“ ’Tis writ for thee,
And in a most eccentric chapter.”

GOETHE'S *Faust*.

“ Men die when the night raven sings or cries ;
But when Dick sings the night raven dies.”

From the Greek Anthology.

“ His head was balled, and shone as any glas.”

CHAUCER: *The Monk's Tale.*

“ For freshest wits I know will soon be weary
Of any book, how grave soe'er it be,
Except it have odd matter, strange and merrie,
Well sauced with lies, and glarid all with glee.”

Mirror for Magistrates.



CHAPTER III.

PLEASE pardon presumption, but I hope by this time the reader, from the truly handsome manner in which he has thus far been treated, has become thoroughly imbued with the notion that it is the desire of the writer to deal with him with perfect uprightness and candor. I trust he sees, as I do, that it is for the best interests of us both that I do so, and that hence, unless, indeed, (which is incredible after so considerable an acquaintance with me!) he be disposed to set little store by the author's judgment, he will feel still more secure of continued

ingenuous treatment. Furthermore, in taking a retrospective view of the chapters which have preceded, the sagacious and kind reader will doubtless also conclude that I have not only been honest — conscientious — in all my dealings with him, but that I have exhibited unmistakable signs of possessing a character of real benevolence in the disinterested efforts I have made to add to my narrative incidental features that are calculated to give both pleasure and instruction.

These points being settled, then, I can proceed with my task with great satisfaction,—the greater from the conviction forced upon me that I have succeeded in convincing a comparative stranger, who thus far has perused only a very few of my pages, of facts, viz: my perfect integrity and absolute benevolence, which formerly I spent whole years in endeavoring to beat into the stupid understanding of an esteemed contemporary in the journalistic line, and, to all appearance, with only a partial success at the very best, in the end! And reflecting upon the matter at this distance, it appears really marvelous how that man *wouldn't* learn! I took a vast deal of pains with him, too;—told him often and with much forcible iteration that I meant every word I said;—endeavored, in the language of Carleton's old farmer,

“To give him some strapping good arguments, that
he couldn't help but to feel.”

It did seem occasionally, as one after another my thunderbolts were forged and fulminated, that he *couldn't* be so dull as to fail in appreciation of my positions, and to acknowledge himself convinced,—but he did fail, and miserably! And then he had such a discouraging way of expressing his incredulity! Discouraging, say I?—yea, positively offensive, oftentimes, was his manner, and sufficient to cause a less persistent and disinterestedly-benevolent person than I to quite give over the task of converting the fellow.* Did I give it over? Go ask the intelligent subscribers of my late paper! Go ask the able editors of my numerous exchanges! Go ask the gentleman himself for whose benefit my efforts were expended! But all this is a digression, and I must resume my task.

*HOLMES has some lines which run about as follows:

“Perhaps it was right to dissemble his love,—
But why did he kick me down stairs?”

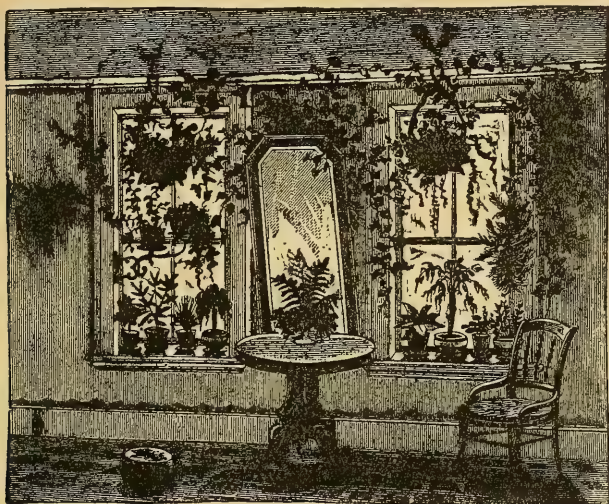
I seek not to disguise from the gentle reader, who has just made a concession so flattering to me, that I was far from feeling perfectly tranquil concerning the proposed removal to the farm, and the exchanging of my regular and tried business for a life of "bucolic ease," now that the way seemed open for the consummation of my long-cherished scheme. Had it not been that I had painted to my friends so many full-length and larger-than-life-size pictures in rose-tints, of rural living,—had taken views thereof that I believed at the time, deep down in my heart of hearts, were somewhat too fair,—I should have felt easier. But, then, you must reflect that I had been, in a sense, driven to my rhetoric and my poetry by the obstinacy of the enemy with whom I had to contend, to wit: the best and dearest in the world! They were convinced, or, perhaps, rather, silenced; and now I perceived that the arguments I had found so far effective as against them, had failed in entirely satisfying my own mind. A singular state of affairs, indeed! Here had I supposed myself thoroughly persuaded of the very great desirability of the change, long months since, and had been felicitating myself upon the happiness which would visit my household when once all its members (as I never for a moment doubted we should come to do) at length had learned to look upon the matter in the same light,—and that light of the peculiarly beautiful roseate tint which I was all the time trying to throw upon it! Now the hoped-for time had arrived, so far, at least, as the feelings of those whose approbation of my pet plan seemed important, were concerned, and here at last was I experiencing a vague feeling of uneasiness that frequently amounted to discontent.

Although the necessity of maintaining a standing army of arguments to hold my conquered moral-provinces in subjection did not appear to exist any longer, still let it not be thought that all my friends had coincided in pronoun-

cing my crusade of a physical character against the forces of nature in the open field, one dictated by the greatest wisdom. My father, although a farmer, and a lover of the husbandman's calling, was not fully convinced that, for me, it was just the best enterprise in the world. Then he was not one-half so much in love with the tract of land I had chosen, as was I. For various reasons he deemed my scheme Utopian. Again, I had a cousin in the country, "The old 'Squire," we called him, (though, to be sure, it was not his extreme age which had won him the distinction of the adjective) who was fond of uniting his forces with father's to the end of rallying me upon what he considered my Quixotic venture. The 'Squire is a good, genial fellow; he has only two or three defects, and they are minor ones. He will tease a companion to the point of desperation, and then, even if the joke is not worth a copper, he will laugh at a fellow in such a manner that the latter will almost think there must have been a point to it somewhere, albeit so fine as to have escaped recognition. He is a social being, is my excellent cousin, a chatty *vis-a-vis*, jolly as old King Cole in his palmiest days, and I always like to have him "happen around."

The old 'Squire was never much of a songster; and I have always believed that he so delighted in "running upon" me *anent* my farming project partly because of my superior *vocal endowments* (now that is *too* bad; for indeed, to speak verity in parenthesis, I am never allowed to exalt my voice in song anywhere in the neighborhood of a human habitation: this is Malvina's strictest order!) and partly on account of a huge practical joke I once played upon him, whereby I demonstrated, even to his own thorough satisfaction, how flagrant was the offense against decency, good order, and the "dignity of the people of the State" (he was a justice of the peace, you know,) he committed whenever he attempted to sing!

Once upon a time, in a certain snug little country parlor, in regions far north, three of us, young, giddy things, were singing a song, the tune whereof was pitched on rather a



lofty key. The 'Squire, who ordinarily kept some sort of slender hold upon the leading strings of his voice, in the excitement of the exercise on this occasion forgot all discretion, and was giving full play to his powerful lungs, the effect whereof, while the other (not by any means weak-voiced) performers were exerting theirs vigorously, was not offensively apparent to the hearers, of which there were several within the room. My cousin was not "carrying" any particular part, but, as the western phrase is, was "just goin' in promiscus-like." And was he not enjoying it! His head swayed from side to side, as with half-closed and rolling eyes, and open mouth and throat, he was giving utterance to sounds that beggared all description!

I had become aware of the state of affairs by the difficulty I experienced in making audible my own not always dulcet tones. It appears that *satan* and myself had made the dis-

covery simultaneously, and he put a wicked thought into my mind.

"I paused not to question.
The devil's suggestion,"*

but like a flash acted upon it. Clapping my hand, by a backward movement thereof, over the mouth of our fair companion and assistant, in such a manner as to effectually silence her voice, and that instantaneously, my own ceased at the moment, and—what was left! Well, it was, as intimated above, something simply indescribable!

You've read Holmes' *Music Grinders*, and remember how, when you heard them,

"You'd think they were crusaders sent
From some infernal clime,
To pluck the eyes of sentiment,
And dock the tail of rhyme—
To crack the voice of melody,
And break the legs of time!—"

But that don't commence: five octaves higher at least must we go! Hear another poet:

"With pleasure I have heard the hooting
Of midnight owlets through the gloom;
With calmness I have heard disputing
Full fourteen women in one room;
With patience I have heard the bawling
Of children in the nursery,
And to disturb me, caterwauling
Most horrible indeed must be!
I've stood where cannons loud did rattle,
Where shells did hurtle, bullets hiss;
I've heard fierce elemental battle,
The roar and rush of herds of cattle;
But never heard I aught like this!
Composed I'd bear the wild, weird calling
Of fierce wolves, prowling in the wood,—
But to my very soul appalling
Are sounds like these—they freeze the blood!"†

*HORACE SMITH.

†UNCLE HEZ, at a very early day.

Indeed, that you may be sure I am not overdrawing the picture, I will state (what is a fact, and one, too, I can but consider very much to the credit of the gentleman we are discussing!) that when the others had ceased the old 'Squire himself seemed horror-stricken at the fearful sounds issuing from him; but he appeared quite powerless for a moment or two to "quell the disturbance" he was himself the author of, so bewildered was the poor fellow, or so difficult did he find it to descend from the dizzy altitude he had attained! His eyes almost started from their sockets, and his hair would doubtless have "stood on end, like quills upon the fretful porcupine," but for a "good and sufficient reason" which will presently appear. He put a quietus on the "music" as soon as possible, and that he was greatly mortified may be gathered from the circumstance that for a lengthy interval he appeared much dejected, although the rest of the company remained quite cheerful,—in short, a great deal too cheerful, apparently, for the perfect peace of my good cousin's mind;—they were hilarious—demonstrative—boisterous in their merriment—and with reason! But none of us all have been persuasive enough to induce the 'Squire to "let himself out" in a vocal concert from that day to the present writing.

My good-hearted cousin professed to have recollections of my farming as a boy. He was in the habit of "throwing up" to me a trick perpetrated (he always claims at my suggestion) by himself and the writer one fine summer day a good many years ago. We had a piece of grass-bound corn to hoe that morning; but we were quite desirous to go fishing. The last few, short rows of that corn were fearfully encumbered with the *poa pratensis**; this called for the expenditure of a great deal of labor and promised to waste much valuable time. Neither did it appear to our unprejudiced eyes (unprejudiced, that is to say, by any selfish sense of the

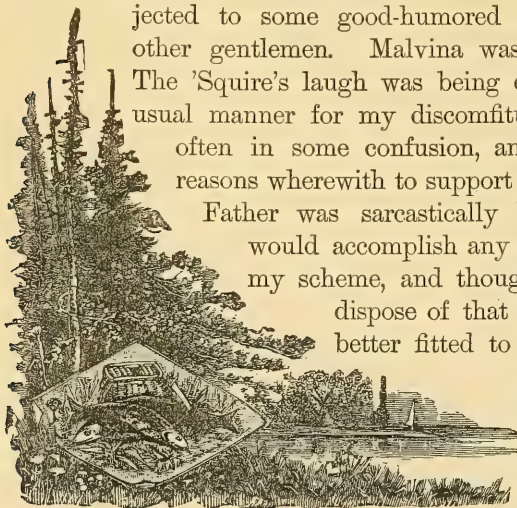
* June grass, or Kentucky blue grass.

value of the growing grain) that this particular portion of the crop would repay for the labor required to cultivate it. The old 'Squire avers that we took our hoes and made a surprisingly sudden end of that task, by cutting out bodily the few hills of corn constituting the last two or three rows, and then fled, like two shadows, across the sweet, green fields to the tree-shaded bank of the stream, where fish and pleasure were supposed more to abound. I do not think this tale is entirely without foundation; but as to the source of the suggestion upon which the nefarious deed was done, why, I am not so clear.

My father and the 'Squire happened to be visiting together at my humble village home one day in the spring, and household and visitors held a sort of symposium out upon the verandah after tea. It was a mild and beautiful evening, the air was full of sweet sounds and odors, and it was just the sort of an occasion when, if ever, in Irving's phrase, "the rural feeling throbs in every breast."

I was in high spirits, and had been boasting a little of my accomplishments as an agriculturist. I had also been subjected to some good-humored ridicule by the other gentlemen. Malvina was defending me. The 'Squire's laugh was being employed in the usual manner for my discomfiture; and I was often in some confusion, and put to it for reasons wherewith to support myself.

Father was sarcastically hopeless that I would accomplish any worthy thing by my scheme, and thought I had better dispose of that land to another better fitted to the task of improving it. He had "not a grain of faith" that I would do any work in the field.



My cousin ventured the guess that I "would make a first-rate hand to hold the top rail upon the fence! Haw! Haw! Haw!"

This banter put me to my trumps. I bade the gentlemen to gaze about them where they were now sitting, and observe what I had there accomplished with my own hand, and within a few years. I told them to observe my lawn, (a little plot of ground, containing some two hundred square yards, which I had covered with sod, and of which I was very proud), my shrubbery, my shade and fruit trees! I exclaimed: "Compare this verdure-covered knoll where my cottage stands to-day with that arid waste I found here! 'Twas then," I continued, "as barren and as bare as —." The sentence was never finished; for I here gazed wildly about me for some ineffably dry and desolate object by which to make my comparison, and my eyes being raised in a line with the 'Squire's, in an instant his face, neck and ears were of the color of the June rose. My good cousin is quite sensitive, and although his heart is in the right place, his hair isn't; that is to say, there is a large amount of it upon his upper lip, where it is an intolerable nuisance, while he is as bald as was Nicias, or Silenus! I had demolished him for that day.

I am not unaware that in relating these anecdotes concerning my treatment of my excellent relative, I am laying myself open to the charge of having, at different periods of my life, disregarded both the rules of good breeding and the golden rule. Now were I bald-headed, for instance, "as Brutus is," I should not relish to have the circumstance made conspicuous in a mixed company, and although, from the fact that I was "born to blush unseen," if to blush at all, I might not visibly assume a rosy hue when one should seek out the shining dome which surmounted me wherewithal to show by comparison the infinite barrenness of a sandy desert, still, doubtless, my feelings would suffer, and I should feel like calling out the bears, as was done in the case of Elijah in his

controversy with the bad little boys! And notwithstanding that the great good humor of the 'Squire enabled him within a few minutes to pay my poor joke the usual compliment of a hearty "Haw! Haw! Haw!" as, with him, a joke is a joke, no matter who is the victim, my conscience invariably smites me when I recall this incident.

Then in that other affair, my conduct was reprehensible in the extreme! I was ungentlemanly not only toward the 'Squire, who was so thoroughly enjoying himself in his unwonted vocal exercise, and whose dream of pleasure was so rudely interrupted, but I was also inexcusably impolite in my treatment of the lady who formed one of the trio of singers. I was bound, moreover, by all the rules which govern good society, to make a humble apology to the audience we had that night, for the sudden and terrible surprise I gave them when I let loose upon their defenseless ears the naked melody of the old 'Squire's voice,—which apology I entirely forgot to make! My only possible excuse for these last-mentioned offenses is my extreme youth at the time, and the fact recorded in detailing the shameful affair, that it was of the devil's prompting. But if it be true, as currently reported, that the old Serpent (who is Abaddon!) delights in mischief for its own sake, I can well believe that when "his glowerin' een" were rewarded with the spectacle of the perfect success of his trick upon the occasion in question, he conducted himself precisely as he did at a former time, when something happened to his liking, and when, as Southey declares, he

"— Knew not for joy what to do,
In his hoofs, and his horns, in his heels, and his corns,
It tickled him all through!"

Now, having made full confession and acknowledgement of his sins, and expressed his contriteness therefor, the author

feels better, and freely forgives all his enemies and is willing himself to be forgiven! The next chapter is one by no means to be skipped. In the meantime, reader, good night! and may your dreams be as sweet as a poet's vision of a land

“Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute;
Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppressed with perfume,
Wax faint in the garden of Gul, in her bloom;
Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
And all, save the spirit of man, is divine!”



MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER IV.



"Me that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread."

Proverbs.

"A lawyer, art thou? draw not nigh!

Go carry to some fitter place

The keenness of that practiced eye,

The hardness of that sallow face."

WORDSWORTH.

"The bar does not claim to be the communion of saints."

Address by CHIEF JUSTICE RYAN, of Wisconsin.

"Compound for sins they are inclined to,

By damning those they have no mind to."

Hudibras.

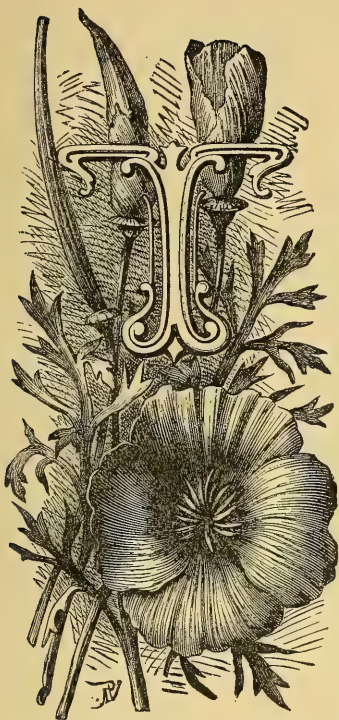
Mail, therefore, patroness of health and ease,

And contemplation, heart-consoling joys,

And harmless pleasures,—in the thronged abode

Of multitudes unknown;—hail rural life!

COWPER: *Task.*



CHAPTER IV.

THE discussion begun, as narrated in the last chapter, was resumed the next morning under the wild cherry trees that ornamented my little lawn. With the odors of the blossoms in my nostrils and the music of the glad birds in my ears, I began the debate by quoting Herrick's couplet:

"The best compost for his lands,
Is the wise master's feet and hands."

And then, in reply to the objection urged by one of the gentlemen in opposition, that I had not made it very profitable farming thus far, I quoted

Greeley's *Recollections* where the author observes: "Publishing newspapers by proxy would be still more ruinous than farming" in that way. Then I chanced to think of Poor Richard's distich, and gave 'em that:

"He that by the plow would thrive
Himself must either hold or drive."

"I think so," replied my father, drily. And then he added: "That is precisely what you'll never do."

The 'Squire's view of the case coincided with this last, of course. "But where is that poem upon this subject which

you have promised to read us?" demanded the latter. I renewed the promise, and the discussion proceeded.

It is a remarkable circumstance, perhaps, that sometimes in a disputed matter which concerns yourself most nearly, you feel abundantly supplied with reasons wherewith to overwhelm your opponents in a space of time too brief to mention, and yet from a sort of weakness, a lazy indifference, or a disinclination to exert all your powers, you will permit yourself to be pursued, badgered, and harrassed for an indefinite period, and content yourself with making poor, mean, trivial excuses that will not bear the rigid scrutiny of a moment, and serve rather to weaken than strengthen your position. This had been precisely my own case. I had in my quiver all this time some argumentative arrows that I knew were really potent, such as I believed would prove, if properly discharged, effective with the two intelligent gentlemen who were just now causing me so much trouble. I had at length concluded that I should be obliged to rouse myself. They evidently saw that something was coming, for they drew closer; and I could discern from their manner that they were prepared to listen.

My father had spoken of my "two good professions," viz.: the law and journalism, which I proposed to neglect in order to engage in husbandry,—and I began there.

"In the first place, as you know, my health has been impaired by confinement, and is at this time so delicate that I cannot follow that sort of life longer with safety. It is a little better in the *sanctum* than the law office, for, where, as has been the case with me, and is likewise the case in a majority of country newspaper offices, the editing, book-keeping, soliciting, etc., are all done by a single person, the ssesions at the table or desk are not so protracted nor so wearing to body and mind; but still the office-work is not inconsiderable, and I am convinced is quite too much for me; and the item of health, as you will be disposed to admit,

is not an unimportant one. Without health, indeed, a man may be somewhat,—but he will not be himself. Leaving out of the account for the moment the poignant suffering of its weary owner, just imagine, if you can, what effect upon his work, and through that upon all cotemporary, yea, and upon all subsequent literature, and mayhap, also, upon civilization itself, has had, or will have, that dyspepsia-damned stomach of Carlyle!

“But there are other considerations I opine, of sufficient weight to merit attention. Take the case of the average young lawyer. Put yourself in his place. You fit up an office in a town, placing as many of those sheep-bound books upon your shelves as you can muster. You set up a stove and table; a bit of old carpet is spread in front. An iron safe, (it looks right well in a young attorney’s office), purchased on the installment plan, stands conspicuous in a corner; you take down one of those heavy tomes, elevate your heels to the top of the table or safe, and wait; and waiting—fall asleep! Awaking with a start at noon, you go to your dinner, and thereafter returning, you go through with the routine marked out in the morning; and so you continue to do, with perhaps slight incidental interruptions and variations, every week day for a number of years. After a while, however, the happy period arrives when you begin to have clients and business accumulates. What is this business, for the larger part? Condemned are we

‘To drudge for the dregs of men,
And scrawl strange words with a barbarous pen!’

“I will suppose for you a sample case:

“A. brings suit against B. in a justice’s court, (in assumption) claiming by his pleadings that the defendant (that’s B.) owes him upon account three hundred dollars or under. The indebtedness, if anything, is in reality but a very small sum, three, five, or ten dollars, perhaps; but the claim is

made thus large in the process and declaration so that if by any means the proofs shall show the amount due to be unexpectedly great, or the court shall prove complaisant to the plaintiff in the suit, because he is 'the man who makes the business,' it is well to be able to have it all put in the judgment, and the latter can not exceed the claim except by the amount of costs of suit. But the sum you hope to recover is small, very small in the average of cases,—so insignificant indeed that if it were your own case you would much prefer giving it to the defendant to harrassing him (and yourself) with a law-suit.

"Perchance B. is a poor man, and is struggling hard in a manful endeavor to support a large and ever-increasing family, with which blessing poor men are apt to be blessed, (see Psalm CVII, v. 41), afflicted, it may be, with sickness, or other bad fortune. But the suit is brought and you are attorney for the plaintiff. Now what is expected of you? Why, you are to go into court and win that suit if possible. You are to develop a miraculous degree of interest in the matter, too, if you desire to please your client and meet his expectations of you. You are to contend for the paltry sum which he claims is due him as if a great principle were involved. Why not? have you not taken for a fee A.'s money? (or his promise!) and aren't you his advocate? and isn't his cause your own? *He* is intensely interested. If he wins the cause, he stands a chance of collecting from B. the amount claimed as his due; but he will also, and this is frequently the most important part to him, (for these little matters often stir up much feeling), inflict punishment upon B. You are to work, then, with all these things in view. If you will 'tongue-lash' * B. to some extent during the trial,

* A friend of the author in his younger days—an acute and ambitious attorney—was actually employed to undertake the trial of a cause in a justice's court (the young lawyer himself was my informant) with an express understanding that if he would thoroughly *tongue-lash*

and his attorney, too, if he have one, it will redound all the more to the satisfaction of your client.

"You are in court. The pleadings are filed and the cause is ready for trial. Now you are expected by your client to take all the advantages offered by the mistakes of the opposite party, the remissness or ignorance of the court, the diffidence of witnesses on one side and their dishonest willingness on the other,—in short, of everything that will operate to the behoof of that side upon which you happen to be retained. It is pretty hard, of course, for a beginner to maintain throughout the trial of a cause managed in this way, a countenance and manner expressive of a soul bent only on an honest and zealous search for truth; but, it must be learned. The 'virtuous indignation' dodge must be practiced as often as you catch the attorney for the defense using the tactics you are expected to employ;—and if you watch carefully it will cause you to smile directly to perceive how closely opposing counsel is carrying out the program I have here marked out to you.

"Well, the cause has been tried, and, as we will suppose, you have won. By negligence upon the part of B.'s lawyer the time allowed by law for obtaining a stay of proceedings has expired, and no stay has been had. You are watching the matter closely, (your fee of five dollars has been paid over, and you are more zealous in your client's behalf than ever), and promptly, at your request, the execution issues from the hand of the justice. An officer receives it, and then you begin your persecution of the defendant until the judg-

(that was the term used by the Hibernian client) the opposite party he should receive twice the usual fee for his services. It will, perhaps, be of interest to the reader to learn that the attorney did not fail to earn the additional stipend, and that it was gratefully paid over at the conclusion of the trial. This may be the sole case of record where such a contract has been entered into by attorney and client; it is probable, however, that it is not the only case ever known.

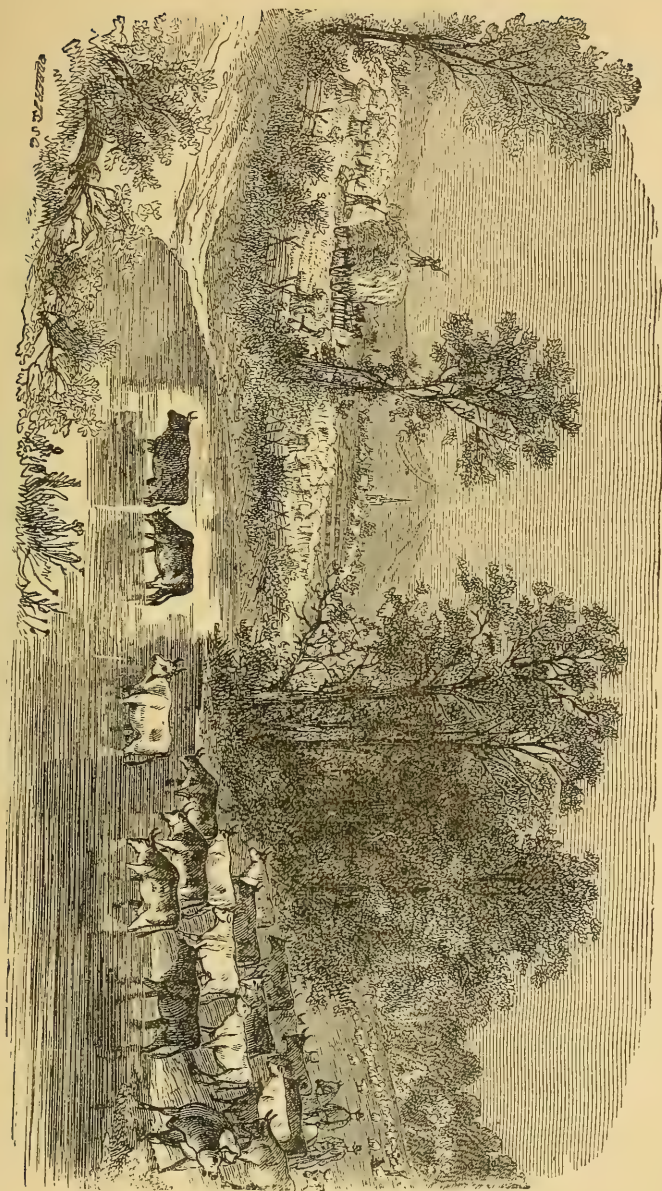
ment and costs are collected, or you have learned, to your chagrin, that B. is poor,—poor in short as is reputed to have been Job's celebrated Thanksgiving turkey,—and quite execution proof.

"You feel pretty well, however: you have won your cause and even secured a larger judgment than by the facts and the law you were really entitled to. But this is only an evidence of your faithfulness to your client's interests and your great ability as an advocate!

"But, on the other hand, let us suppose the case to have gone against you. You declined to befog or corrupt the court; though opportunity was offered, you refused to hoodwink the jury, brow-beat opposing, or wheedle into falsehood friendly witnesses, and you behaved like a rational christian gentleman throughout the trial, giving utterance to no abusive language directed against opposing counsel or defendant; and you lost the cause! What remains for you to do? Why, go back to your den in disgrace,—and whether you ever get the promised fee of A. or not depends upon circumstances.

"By-and-by, when you receive your first retainer for a cause in the higher court, you will begin to learn that the conditions of success are much the same here. It is true you usually find a good lawyer upon the bench, and hence the abuses practiced in the trial of causes are not so open and flagrant; but all the arts learned in the lower court will come into play here; and it will be found, until a reputation has been achieved by the practitioner,—which may happen with men possessing only ordinary ability after some decades have passed, in other cases, as where the attorney is endowed with unusual talents, or has been favored by fortune in some other manner, at a much earlier period,—that they will, for the most part, continue to be employed by the ambitious or hungry members of the profession, and will form the major portion of the advocate's mental armor.

THE FARMER'S PEACEFUL PURSUIT.



"This is one phase of the matter. I am not claiming here that there are no honest or benevolent lawyers. Far, very far from it. What I do claim is that the tendency of the business, at this day and age of the world, is to harden and debase men, and that in consequence thereof we find enrolled in the ranks of the profession still many Dobsons and Foggs, Quirks, Gammons, and Snaps. The prosperity of the brotherhood (so numerous to-day and increasing in numbers yearly) depends upon the quarrels, contentions, dishonesty and misery of the people. It is not for a lawyer to allay difficulties and settle disputes among neighbors without a resort to the courts, for soon he would find, as did Othello, his occupation gone. He is not a lover of peace, neither, indeed, can he be. Contention, contention, contention is the life of his trade, and must ever be, and so long as even the honest lawyer meets daily in his practice with opponents who habitually employ pettifogging tricks and chicanery in the trial of causes, he will be strongly tempted to oppose fraud with cunning, and thus to fling away that ingenuousness, that open, honest habit which the happy farmer is never obliged to surrender.

"'It is a strange trade, I have often thought,' observes Carlyle in his *Reminiscences*, 'that of advocacy. Your intellect, your highest heavenly gift, hung up in the shop window, like a loaded pistol, for sale; will either blow out a pestilent scoundrel's brains, or the scoundrel's solitary sheriff's officer's (in a sense) as you please to choose for your guinea.'*

"It was a characteristic feature of Utopia that there were no lawyers there. I will read you what the author says on that head:

"'They have no lawyers among them, for they consider them as a sort of people whose profession it is to disguise matter as well as to arrest laws.'†

*CARLYLE'S *Rem.*: Remarks on Jeffrey's celebrated defense of Nell Kennedy. †SIR THOMAS MORE: *Utopia*.

"I will read you also what the 'tough old Dean' (as Holmes calls him) has to say :

" 'There is a society of men among us, bred up from their youth in the art of proving, by words multiplied for the purpose, that white is black and black is white, according as they are paid. To this society all the rest of the people are slaves.'*

"Our author is aiming his shafts at the legal profession here," I concluded.

"And Swift was not always so slow!" commented my father, sententiously.

"The law is good," I resumed; "the law means well; but it too often becomes the interest of the attorney to wrest and distort it from its proper use. Its end is undoubtedly justice; but how frequently do we see it made the instrument of the rankest, foulest iniquity!

"Just think of this once: Every case that goes into court is represented by counsel on both sides. These are men whose interests, like those of their clients, are diametrically opposed to each other. When just begun, and the blood is still cool, one would be apt to believe that incentive enough existed to induce the advocate on either side to exhaust all honorable means at command to overthrow his antagonist and win the cause for his client. But as the trial proceeds, *feeling* is engendered. The attorney becomes identified with the cause he advocates. He meets with rebuffs, and it gives him longings for revenge. Then the eyes of many are upon him, and it is but natural that he should greatly dislike to submit to defeat even in what would readily be perceived to be a bad cause. I tell you, gentlemen, it is *a mighty good man* who will withstand a temptation to take a wrongful advantage if, under such circumstances as we have

*GULLIVER'S *Travels*.

here supposed, one offers. History sadly records the fact that they don't always resist."*

"We won't practice law, I guess," was my father's remark when I had reached this point and paused for breath.

The 'Squire observed, with a very knowing expression of countenance, that he had had some experience with attorneys when he had been addressed as "your honor." He didn't think any durned lawyer had ever hoodwinked, or befogged *that* court, but entertained no doubt that they had tried. He admitted, however, that I had made out quite a case so far as the profession of the law was concerned; now he would like to hear what I had to say about the newspaper business.

If the reader will peruse the next chapter he will learn what response I made to my cousin's request; I will conclude the chapter in hand with some words written by the great and good Horace Greeley:

"I regard farming as that vocation which conduces most directly and palpably to a reverence for honesty and truth. The young lawyer is often constrained, or at least tempted, by his necessities, to do the dirty professional work of a rascal intent on cheating his neighbor out of his righteous dues. The young doctor may likewise be incited to resort to a quackery he despises in order to secure instant bread;

*Since the above was composed the author has happened upon the following sage counsel in the *Confessions* of ROUSSEAU; a book, by the way, which contains some things both well and wisely written:

"It [the conduct of his father, under certain circumstances] has taught me this great lesson of morality, * * that we should ever carefully avoid putting our interests in competition with our duty; or promise ourselves felicity from the misfortunes of others, certain that in such circumstances, however sincere our love of virtue may be, sooner or later it will give way, and we shall imperceptibly become unjust and wicked, in fact, however upright in our intentions."—Book II.

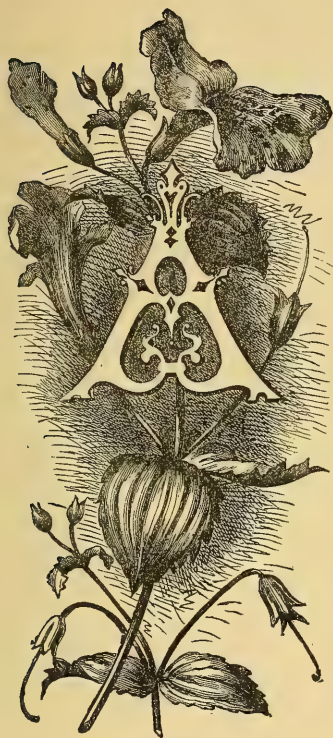
the unknown author is often impelled to write what will sell rather than what the public ought to buy; but the young farmer, acting *as* a farmer, must realize that his success depends upon his absolute verity and integrity. He deals directly with Nature, which never was and never will be cheated. * * * The farmer's calling seems to me that most conducive to thorough manliness of character."



MOTTO FOR CHAPTER V.

"Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble minds)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days ;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life."

MILTON, *Lycidas*.



CHAPTER V.

CKNOWLEDGE will I a great fondness for the trade of the journalist; so great, in fact, that 'were I not Alexander I would be Diogenese'; and hence, when I choose the part of Agricola, it is, in the language of Brutus, 'not that I love Cæsar less, but Rome more'. There is a fascination about newspaper work that it is difficult to explain; but it is so certainly there that very few who have once been in bondage to the periodical press are ever completely 'heart whole and fancy free' again:

'You may break, you may shatter the vase if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.'

"But the labor is never ending — infinite! and the public for whom it is done is invariably ungrateful; this makes it certain that the remuneration will, except in rare instances, be poor,—and this, oftentimes, it indeed is, even to the ultimate degree.

"In this profession, and particularly in the more humble walks thereof, wherein it has been my fortune to tread, it is impossible for a conscientious man to satisfy himself with

achievement. He makes himself an ideal standard for a family newspaper, and then finds it impossible to produce that kind of a journal. And why? Simply because his revenues are never (or so seldom that it is not worth while to take account of the exceptions to the rule) sufficient to enable him to do so. I believe it to be a fact, capable of statistical demonstration, that, in our country, newspaper men receive less compensation for their labor, quantity and quality of the latter considered, than any other class whatever. This is certainly wrong—a vast injustice—and works ill to all the public; but it cannot be denied that journalists themselves are greatly, though not wholly, to blame for this condition of things. I could suggest certain action on the part of the profession, which would, I think, if taken concertedly, go far toward abolishing existing abuses and bear fruit in the shape of an increase in the ‘poor printer’s’ revenues. But this is neither the time nor the place for such suggestions.

“The reason, then, why I do not remain in the old harness I have worn so long and so contentedly, are, primarily, that my health has suffered therein, and, secondarily, that it does not pay.

“I have not in anything I have said intended to be understood as making a claim that the lot in life of the journalist, outside of and excepting those little matters already particularly noted, is all pleasure—all sunshine. By no manner of means! There are the dark passages. There are the mistakes a merely human being unavoidably makes, which, being of their very nature public and apparent, will be perceived, then seized upon, exposed, expatiated upon by envious or malicious rivals, or wicked men in other walks of life, and of opposite political affiliations perhaps. Then arise contentions, and acrimonious controversies,—almost unavoidable,—at all events not always avoided,—and violent personal warfares among the brotherhood, with

a host of minor connected matters, most perplexing and disagreeable, and all belonging peculiarly to this business.

"Still I love the profession and, it may be, who knoweth? I shall one day find myself again upon the tripod *whaling away* with pencil, long scissors and paste-pot, getting up 'heavy articles' or fabricating 'spicy locals' to feed some hebdomadal devil-fish which has somehow managed to get its tentacles fastened upon me, and which will be, even then, engaged in sucking the life and energy out of its feeder, body and spirit! but that will be, if ever, after I have had time to rebuild my mental and physical systems."

"It always appeared to me pleasant," here observed my cousin, "that you editors could 'have your say' upon every subject that comes up, and if it isn't very bright always, or worth attending to, your matter usually has force, being in print. Some things I myself have read of your getting up, which sounded pretty well in a newspaper, but which I should have considered hardly worth listening to if you had spoken them."

The old 'Squire is sometimes *quite* complimentary.

"That is true," I replied, without noticing the wretched joke of my cousin, "and at one time I valued highly that privilege of speaking off-hand upon all manner of topics as one having authority; but, as poor old Rip Van Winkle observes, 'that was a goot vile ago.' My appetite for that sort of glory has been sated, and now I crave nothing so much as peace and repose,—which means leisure to follow my own inclinations,—believing that the moral taught in the story of king Pyrrhus and his Counsellor is a good one,"

Then I related the old story:

"'When the great king had completed his preparations to march into Italy the wise Cyneas inquired:

"'To what end do you make these mighty preparations?'

"'To make myself master of Italy' replied the king.

“‘And what after that is done?’ queried the other.

“‘I will march into Gaul and Spain,’ said Pyrrhus.

“‘And what then?’ pursued Cyneas.

“‘I will then go and subdue Africa,’ answered the king, ‘and, lastly, when I have subjugated the whole world, I will sit down content at my own ease.’

“‘In the name of all the gods, sire,’ replied the Counselor, ‘tell me what hinders you from sitting down now, without further fatigue or danger, to the enjoyment of what you have!’

“‘Indeed,” I resumed, “I am fully persuaded that I could now, as Montaigne wished to do, ‘content myself without bustle, only to live an irreproachable life, and such a one as may neither be a burden to myself nor any other.’”*

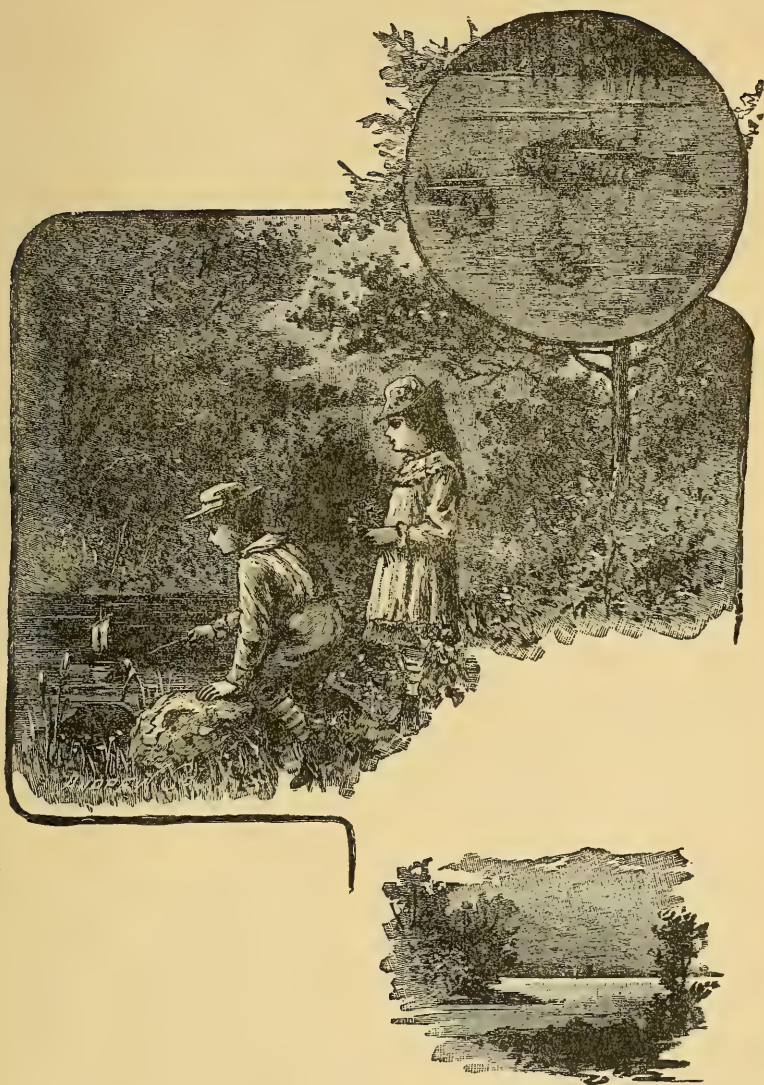
I then quoted:

“‘You see we’re tired, my heart and I;
We dealt with books, we trusted men,
And in our own blood drenched the pen,
As if such colors would not fly.
We walked too straight for fortune’s end,
We loved too true to keep a friend:
At last we’re tired, my heart and I.†

“‘It has been my fortune,” I went on,—“gentle and peace-loving as I am by nature,—to be continually at war in one way or another, with politicians, with near or more remote cotemporaries, with upholders of ancient abuses which I have attacked, with this one and that one, but with somebody always and forever, so that though I cry ‘peace! peace! there is no peace,’ nor has there been for ‘lo! these many years.’ I mean now or, at least, so soon as the old newspaper is disposed of, I feel confident that I shall be able,

‘Safe in my sylvan home
To tread on the pride of Greece and Rome,—’

**Essays*, Book III, Chap. IX. †MRS. BROWNING.



(though that line sounds a little harsh in its juxtaposition) to enjoy a peace that will pass the understanding of the worldling. I shall have bidden

‘Good-bye to flattery’s fawning face;
To grandeur with his wise grimace;
To upstart wealth’s averted eye;
To supple office, low and high;
To crowded halls, to court and street;
To frozen hearts and hasting feet;
To those who go and those who come;
Good-bye, proud world, I’m going home!’”

“That sounds very pretty,” observed the ‘Squire rather ironically. “Is that all there is of it?”

“No,” replied I, for I was now in great good humor; and accordingly I went back and proceeded to give ‘em the first stanza:

“ ‘Good-bye, proud world! I’m going home;
Thou’rt not my friend, and I’m not thine;
Long through thy weary crowds I’ve roamed,
A river ark on the ocean brine;
Long I’ve been tossed like the driven foam,—
But now, proud world, I’m going home!’ ”

“ ‘I’m going to my own hearth-stone,
Bosomed in yon green hills alone,—’ ”

“Sandhills!” interrupted my father; and then he quoted:

“ ‘’Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,
And robes the *mountain* in its *verdant* hue.’ ”

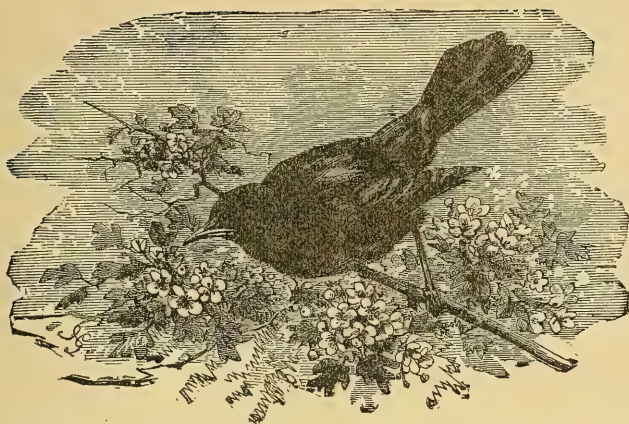
But I went right on:

“ ‘A secret nook in a pleasant land!’ ”

“Better keep it a secret,” growled the old ‘Squire, impatiently.

Still I drove away at Emerson’s rhyme:

“ ‘Whose groves the frolic fairies planned;
Where arches green, the live-long day,
Echo the blackbird’s roundelay,—’ ”



“Blackbirds!” exclaimed my father,—for the boys now evidently meant to dam this flood of verse,—“blackbirds!” cried he; “you can’t raise any corn *there*!”

I did not mean to be bluffed off so easily, and continued :

“ “And vulgar feet have never trod—” ”

“*You* must go on your hands and knees,” laughed the ‘Squire, leering at my well-worn sandals.

“Well, gentlemen, if you want any more poetry to-day, just find it for yourselves,” I said, rising here with dignity and walking down the street toward the office.

“Mad as a hornet!” I heard my father observe in an undertone after I had started.

“Haw! haw! haw!” The reader will readily account for *that*. But I kept right on, looking neither to the right nor to the left.

The discussion, however, was good-humoredly resumed at evening. To meet the objection raised by the ‘Squire that one who was naturally active, charged with life, and ambitious, like myself, would soon tire of sitting in the shade of the verandah in the country “to watch the squash-vines run”, and would be more than likely to drop the

"rural racket", and rush into the crowd again, I instanced the case of the emperor Diocletian, who resigned the crown and scepter, which had become him so well, to retire to private life in the country; and, when afterwards solicited to resume them, was reluctant, and made answer to those who had visited him for the purpose of urging him: "You would not offer to persuade me to this had you seen the fine trees I have planted in my orchard, and the beautiful melons I have grown in my garden."

I also gave them the story of Cato, the censor, out of Plutarch, as follows:

"Near Cato's country seat [says our author] was a cottage which formerly belonged to Manius Curius [Dentatus], who was thrice honored [by the Roman senate] with a triumph. Cato often walked thither, and reflecting on the smallness of the farm and the meanness of the dwelling, used to think of the peculiar virtues of Dentatus, who, though he was the greatest man in Rome, had subdued the most warlike nations, and driven Pyrrhus out of Italy, cultivated this little spot of ground with his own hands, and, after three triumphs, lived in this cottage. Here the ambassadors of the Samnites found him at his simple meal, and offered him a large present of gold; but he absolutely refused it and gave them this answer: 'A man who can be satisfied with such a supper has no need of gold, and I think it more glorious to conquer the owner of it than to have it myself.' Full of these thoughts [continues Plutarch] Cato returned home and taking a view of his own estate, his servants and manner of living, added to his own labor and retrenched his unnecessary expenses."

When I had proceeded thus far, I looked up and saw the fire in my father's keen blue eyes.

"Now that is a story worth hearing," asserted he with emphasis. "That is exactly my notion of a great man."

I could but smile at his earnestness, which I knew was not feigned, for himself had lived the life of a true Roman, after the order of the rustic Dentatus and Cato, and the incident in the life of the former when the ambassadors waited upon him, as above narrated, from a resemblance, real or fancied, brought to my mind an episode in my father's own career.

Years before, when still comparatively young and active, (he was some sixty-six years of age, to be sure, but hale, vigorous, and resolute as a youth of twenty-six, and still called himself a boy) and employed daily in the duties devolving upon him as the manager of his own fine farm, one evening two gentlemen, from the county-seat (distant some twenty miles) visited him. I retain a vivid mental picture now,—after the lapse of nearly a score of years,—of him as he appeared at the precise moment when his visitors approached, and the ceremony of hand-shaking was observed. Clad in plain, strong clothes, with home-made frock, and heavy cow-hide boots, as befitted his vocation, sturdy and strong, firm on his feet he stood, his axe still in his hand, (for he had been engaged in chopping stove-wood at the rear door of his farm-house), and listened while the gentlemen informed him that the district convention of the democratic party, that day held, had nominated him their candidate for the position of representative in the State legislature, and had appointed them to notify him and solicit his acceptance. I remember, also, the reluctance with which he gave his consent to the “use of his name” by his party,—for never can it be truthfully said that my father has sought public office, or even willingly accepted it when freely tendered.

My cousin approved of what I had read, also, and desired me to proceed, for I had fallen into a reverie. Continuing in the volume I had been using, I read how, from the trial of causes in which he was engaged, Cato would return to

his farm, where in a coarse frock, if it was winter, and without any covering (so Plutarch says) if it was summer, he would labor with his domestics, and afterwards sit down and eat with them, and drink home-made wine.

"There's a man worth imitating," observed my father.

"Ye-es," assented the old joker, as if reluctantly, "only in his manner of dress; that would be a little too *airy* for our climate."

I was obliged to agree that the 'Squire had said a good thing, and assisted him in the laugh at his own *bon-mot*.

The story of Cato taking so well, I read a little from the same author concerning Philopœmen, whom, as Plutarch and Pausanias agree, was a very ill-favored man. Our author records that a part of Philopœmen's leisure was spent in the tillage of the field. He had a handsome estate twenty furlongs from the city, to which he went every day after dinner, or after supper, and at night he threw himself upon an ordinary mattress, and slept as one of the laborers. In the morning he rose early and went to work along with the vine-dressers and plowmen. And Plutarch adds: "He endeavored to improve his own estate in the justest way in the world,—by agriculture, I mean. Nor did he apply himself to it in a cursory manner, but in a full conviction that the surest way not to touch what belongs to others is to take care of one's own."

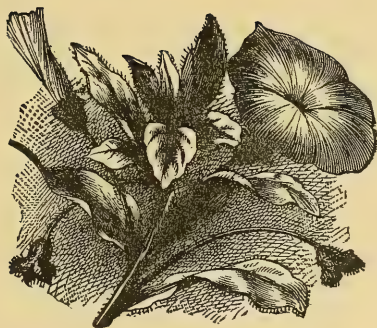
At the conclusion of this tale the 'Squire yawned, and remarked carelessly that he saw one encouraging circumstance for me in this last example, and perhaps I might come out all right after all;—"old Phil. what's-his-name was a mighty homely man,—too!"

I flung the volume from which I had been reading at a certain bald and shining pate, which being duly "ducked," for once Plutarch missed his mark; and as the session broke up the note of the whip-poor-will came clear and

sweet from the bushes in the suburbs just to the northeast of my cottage.

I paused a few moments under the wild cherry trees upon the lawn, after my companions had withdrawn, to listen to the musical voices of the night, to breathe the cool sweet breath of the west, to gaze at the star-sprent firmament, where "Hesperus rode brightest," and the majestic moon that began now to flood the east with her light, and I thought of Southey's fine verses:

"How beautiful is night !
A dewy freshness fills the silent air;
No mist obscures, nor cloud, nor speck nor stain,
Breaks the serene of heaven;
In full-orbed glory yonder moon divine
Rolls through the dark blue depths;
Beneath the steady ray
The desert circle spreads
Like the round ocean girdled with the sky;
How beautiful is night!"



MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER VI.

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"Philosophy will clip an angel's wing."

KEATS: *Lamia*.

"If we don't

'Twill be because our notions are not high  
Of politicians and their double front,  
Who live by lies, yet dare not boldly lie."

BYRON.

"And so from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe,  
And then from hour to hour, we rot and rot,  
And thereby hangs a tale."

SHAKESPEARE: *As You Like It*.



## CHAPTER VI.

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IT was a few days later when my father, with a kind of quizzical expression upon his face, inquired my opinion of Aristotle. I anticipated the springing of some sort of trap, hence rather hesitated about answering; but I finally replied: "Oh, undoubtedly his was a great mind,—perhaps one of the greatest the world has known."

"But didn't he have something to say against this isolation of one's self," inquired my father. "Seems to me," he added, "I've read somewhere that he held that

neither virtue nor happiness are attainable apart from society,\* and that a man who could live alone must be either a god or a beast. Isn't there something of that kind?"

"Well, yes," replied I, "he did hold that doctrine, I guess; but he was nothing but an old barbarian, anyhow!" Whereat we both laughed.

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\*ARISTOTLE'S *Ethics*, 10, 10.

"Seriously, though," I resumed "Aristotle was right, if we take him right. He meant, of course, that condition where a person lives entirely isolated from and independent of society and the state. He didn't intend to include scholarly retirement in the ban, I think. You know that he considered the family (a component part of his model state) as made up of the husband, wife, children and the slaves. The last, to him, were as much a matter of course as any of the others. They were a necessity in the state, he argued, to do the coarse work—the drudgery—so as to afford the citizen opportunity for thought and study, which was to be his whole occupation. I don't suppose we, or either of us, would go to the extent of the noble old Stagirite in any of these matters; but you will admit that he keeps me in countenance to a certain degree by taking the pains he shows to give his contemplative citizen the best possible opportunity for the enjoyment of his favorite pastime. Now I don't believe in total isolation from my fellows. No, no! I agree with Balzac, the French novelist, who says: 'We must certainly acknowledge that solitude is a fine thing; but it is a pleasure to have some one who can answer, and to whom we can say, from time to time, that solitude is a fine thing!' Nor will I go to the extent to which Thoreau goes when he asserts that he 'never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude.' I can but consider Simms as more just, who somewhere says: 'Solitude bears the same relation to the mind that sleep does to the body. It affords it the necessary opportunity for repose and recovery.'

"Really, the ideal life for *me* would be something like this: A rural home like Cicero's villa at Tusculum, perhaps, or Horace's Sabine Farm, or Pliny's rural paradise at Comum, or Virgil's—"

"Never mind the rest of 'em," said my father.



"Well, a home like one of these," I resumed; "but, if upon a humbler scale, of course it would content me. Here with my family and dearest friends I could live in quiet independence and great serenity of mind, with leisure for the study of books and nature,—for contemplation and, perhaps, composition,—with care and labor enough for variety and exercise in the management of my farm and stock; and the privilege, of course, of running out at any time and mingling in cultivated society, and of varying the monotony by enjoying at my own home the company of agreeable and cultured persons, who would visit me by invitation."

"What is it that Swift says?" interrupted my father:

" 'I often wish that I had clear  
For life six hundred pounds a year;  
A river at my garden's end,  
A house in which to lodge a friend!'"

"Yes," I returned, "that's about it; but another has come nearer to the picture. Let's see if I can find what Thompson said," and I arose and went to the book-case.

"Never mind Thompson," cried my father impatiently; but I wilfully insisted, and, having found the place, I read to him:

" 'Oh, knew he but his happiness, of men  
The happiest he, who, far from public rage,  
Deep in the vale, with a choice few retired,  
Drinks the pure pleasure of the rural life!'"\*

"That's quite pretty," was the comment of my listener; encouraged by which, while I was returning *Thompson* to his place on the shelf, I slyly slipped out *Cowper*, and ere my father was aware of my design I had begun to give him the latter poet's sentiments, as follows:

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\**The Seasons.*

“ ‘How various his employments whom the world  
Calls idle, and who justly, in return,  
Esteems the busy world an idler too!  
Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen,  
Delightful industry enjoyed at home,  
And Nature, in her cultivated trim,  
Dressed to his taste, inviting him abroad,—  
Can he want occupation who has these?’ ”\*

I looked up triumphantly, exclaiming:

“ ‘Oh, blest seclusion from a jarring world!’ ”

But my father's mind was employed about another question just then, and it was exceedingly doubtful whether he had heard these last lines; presently he opened his mouth and spoke:

“I have always thought it a little singular that you did not enjoy politics better,” he said; “and particularly as you appeared to have been assigned the post of honor always, locally at least, as the standard-bearer and mouth-piece of your party. While you continued to publish a newspaper you could always be sure of receiving consideration and such honors as the party in your county had to bestow.”

I replied: “I presume I was always treated as well as I deserved; but I never have yet passed through a political campaign when I did not emerge therefrom filled with disgust both with politics and politicians. Politics in this country and at this day are queer *tics*.”

“In what respect do you mean,” demanded my father.

“Well, 'tis a long story, and I ought to go to the office now; but if you will listen a few minutes I will illustrate the matter to you briefly and roughly,” I said.

My father signified a desire to have me proceed, and I gratified him by discoursing somewhat in the following strain:

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\**The Task*, Book III.

"It has come to this pass, in this country, that the best men cannot be nominated and elected to public office, except at very rare intervals. The satirical phrase, 'scholar in politics,' shows the popular feeling upon this subject; and it was considered quite a wonderful circumstance, as you will remember, when, a few years ago, in a Massachusetts district, Professor Seelye, a ripe scholar, an able speaker, and a perfect gentleman, was chosen to congress without his having solicited the honor, or paid a cent. His term expired and—he has not been re-elected, nor will he ever be. The best men do not 'come to the front'; it is the 'available man,'—the popular man,—or the wealthy man who can employ popular advocates of his cause,—who are nominated and elected to office. These men are frequently among the worst in the community, and, in a very large proportion of cases, such as 'stand in' with the saloon interests.

"The primary meetings—the township and ward caucuses—are the points of beginning for the campaign. Here the people meet to choose delegates to represent them in the county convention. This convention not only nominates the party candidates for the various county offices, but chooses delegates, in turn, to the various district conventions of which the county (if it be of the less populous ones) forms a part, and to the state convention, etc. The scramble for the 'loaves and fishes' begins at the primaries, and the struggle among the numerous patriots willing to make sacrifices of themselves for the good of the public, are frequently very earnest, while the situations resulting are sometimes ludicrous in the extreme. Combinations and rings abound, friend cuts the throat of friend, and honorable dealing is a thing little thought of.

"I have sometimes entertained the idea of producing a little comedy to set off these matters, and I may in the future act upon the thought. In the first place, as to the characters,

—I have a coarse draft here of the thing, which I made a day or two since.” And I exhibited the following:

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

- A., *a Lawyer*, Candidate for Judge of Probate.  
 B., *a Citizen*, “ “ Sheriff.  
 C., *an Attorney*, “ “ Clerk.  
 D., *a Citizen*, “ “ Register.  
 E., *an Attorney*, “ “ County Attorney.  
 F., *a Physician*, “ “ Coroner.  
 G., *an Editor*, “ “ Treasurer, or anything else  
 that can be had.  
 H., *Pettifogger and Orator*, Candidate General like the  
 last.  
 I., J., K., Etc., *Citizens, Friends of the various Candidates.*  
 X., Y., Z., Etc., Etc., *Members of the Opposite Faction, Can-*  
*didates, their Friends, Etc., Etc.*

ACT I.

SCENE 1.—*A Meeting in a Lawyer's Private Office.*

A., B., C., E. and F. *are discovered in Council.*

C. [*In Chair.*] Well, gentlemen, is the Slate complete?

B. Not yet, Mr. Chairman, as doubt exists in one or two important matters.

Ch. Will some gentleman state the effect?

E. The doubt is here: We find that there are more of the boys who want positions than there are places to fill. A close canvass of the shire reveals the fact that dissensions in the party this campaign are likely to prove expensive luxuries, as the parties are quite evenly balanced; hence the course pursued must be the conciliatory one.

Ch. [*Impatiently.*] Well, how far have you progressed?

E. Five offices have we provided for, as follows, viz: For Judge of Probate, A.; for Sheriff, B.; for County Clerk, C.; for Register, D.; for Attorney, E., and for Coroner, Dr. F. This leaves the Treasurer's office and that of Commissioner

yet to fill. Little difficulty will be found with the last; but the matter of the Treasuryship will, I fear, cause trouble.

*Ch.* Who are the aspirants?

*E.* The Editor and Mr. H.

*Ch.* Will they not draw for the place?

*E.* Alas, I fear not!

*Ch.* Why, is it not the fairest way?

*E.* Yes, indubitably; but they seem to rather hint that they have rights like the rest of us, and as they both can't have that particular candidature, why one will e'en take (with the permission of the convention) some other position on the ticket!

*All.* Ah! Ah!

*Ch.* [*After an anxious pause.*] Well, let 'em go! Are we not strong enough without 'em?

*E.* Softly, Mr. Chairman! By virtue of the secretary's function, to which position the committee entrusted by the party this campaign to manage, have myself appointed, much I've had to do with our late convass, and I know the estimates of strength of parties and of factions; and here again I warn you that we possess no strength to fritter away in useless discord.

*Ch.* Can the gentleman inform the meeting about the relative strength of parties.

*E.* Roughly that can I. To us the strength of the faction of X. and Y. and Z. is yet unknown; but it bids fair to be so great in the convention that we can ill afford to augment it by a material subtraction from our forces, which might result if there should be a quarrel. Granted that we, combined, are the stronger, as we boast, can you prove that in convention it will be found that

$$a+b+c+d+e+f+g=x+y+z+h?$$

Or that

$$a+b+c+d+e+f+h=x+y+z+g?$$

Or, representing the opposition by U., can you guarantee that, after the nominations shall be made,

$$a+b+c+d+e+f+x+y+z=U+g+h?$$



*Ch.* Well, there's the position of State Senator; would not that appease H.?

*E.* He wants it not.

*Ch.* Then G.?

*E.* But have we the boon to give? But one of four our county is in this our district, and two at least have better claims than ours. Yet might the bait be thrown.

*Ch.* Which of the two would it be safest to disappoint in the end?

*E.* Oh, G., by all means! for, although with his press he is the stronger for good or evil, he is not one-half as likely to quit the party if offended. And H., too, is a power with the *boys behind the bar!*

*Ch.* Can it not be likewise managed that the senatorial convention shall be held quite late? The editor will then be so committed—and publicly—ere the nominations be made (and we shall have made a show of doing all our best for him) that even should he fail (and fail he surely will!) the candidacy to secure, he could not well desert us.

*E.* In that exact manner, then, shall the matter be adjusted.

*Ch.* Can we not complete our Slate, therefore, and be at ease? I desire to be at work securing matters in the primaries; for delegates come thence!

*A.* 'Tis true, we have no time to spare; for X. and Y. and Z. are busy as the devil is said to be in a tornado! Those caucuses do need our close attention from this till th' dawning of that great day, for which all other days were made, to wit: the day o' th' convention! Give us the nominations! We need not fear but that X., Y. and Z. and G. can be whipped in, though disappointed sorely. As for the last, if he essay to kick, why, threaten him with loss of patronage, a rival paper, and financial ruin! But there is K., who long has served the party well, and often has been snubbed; *he* wants a place, and deems he's earned it, too. Something he'd

like that *pays*,—but all of that's farmed out; and we can put him off by — making him the chairman of the great convention, or choosing him upon a delegation.

*Ch.* Yes; we must now to work! the enemy,  
(X, Y and Z, that is) are riding fast  
And far through all the county; and design  
To forge a set of delegates to suit  
Their ends. It is a burning shame to see  
Them interfering thus with th' people's choice,—  
'Tis scandalous! outrageous! But we'll show  
The gents a trick or two will trouble 'em  
Ere they are through with us and the campaign!  
Now, boys, we'll close the session's work right here  
With the doxology, and then adjourn  
To C.'s saloon to have a friendly cup,—  
We're thirsty all, and C. shall "set 'em up!"

Thus closes the first scene. A second scene should discover two tried friends (a very Damon and Pythias)—candidates for different county offices—in close and confidential consultation, which concludes with a warm clasp of hands and a mutual pledge of eternal fidelity (given with tears):

By all the stars that shine above!  
By all I hate and all I love!  
By all that's fair, till all is blue,  
You stand by me, I'll stand by you!

In two subsequent scenes should be exhibited these two friends engaged in plotting each the other's overthrow.

Other scenes should represent the different primary meetings, with would-be candidates manipulating the voters, etc.

A number of fine scenes should show the convention, the plottings and counter-plottings of the candidates and their delegates thereat, the action of the meeting, the different aspirants for legislative honors taking part and intriguing to secure the selection of friendly delegates, etc.,—the chairman's speech with its inevitable reference to the "grand old party," or else to "the party of Jefferson and Jackson," as the case might be, "pointing with pride," etc., etc.

Etc., etc., as to district and state conventions, and other larger matters.

"But," I resumed, tossing my notes aside, "I have not worked it all out as yet, and shall probably proceed no farther with it. Perhaps I have read sufficiently far already to show you that, as I view it, there are some things in the methods of politicians, and something in modern American politics to stir a little disgust in the soul of a sensitive and self-respecting man."

"Yes, fully enough!" ejaculated my father; "but haven't you overdrawn the picture a little?" he asked.

"On the contrary, in this instance 'the devil is blacker than he's painted!'" I returned. "The half can never be told. And the worst of it all is, that by continuing to mingle in these matters, one will almost come to lose his faith in humanity,—so faithless, so utterly false do men become when once they have engaged in this struggle for office, and so corrupting is the influence of such upon the 'common people.' Not all *men*, but, it is perfectly safe to say, all *politicians* are liars! A man whose word you would have considered as good as his bond at one time, becomes a politician, when, presto! change! and you shall find him turn out as bold and shameless a falsifier as was the old Serpent himself, who was—a politician from the beginning! Ah, so base are men!" cried I,—growing passionate as I proceeded;—"I myself have been betrayed by those whom for long years I had counted my staunchest and dearest friends! Oh, this, *this* is the thing that will tend most strongly to make one despise and detest the miserable business!"

My auditor sat silent and in thought for some minutes after this outburst. At length he looked up and I noticed that

"In the glances of his eye  
A penetrating, keen and sly  
Expression [had] found its home."\*

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\*SCOTT.

This was that quizzical look to which I have already made allusion, and which invariably has the effect to render me a little uneasy. At length he spoke:

"Let's see," said he, reflectively and inquiringly, "you must have been in politics some ten or twelve years?"

I had begun to move toward the hall where hung my hat and stick, and I answered him in as careless a manner as I could assume:

"Ye-es;—off and on."

"Did *you* ever fall into the habit of—" he was going on, but of course I couldn't stop to talk all day; it was already long past the hour when I should have been at the office, and the door closing between us cut off the rest of my father's question. My action was rather impolite, I confess, but I think not impolitic, for a sarcastic laugh which followed my exit was audible to me notwithstanding the barrier of the door.

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"Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,  
Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,—  
Far-off from the clamor of liars belied in the hubbub of lies;  
From the long-necked geese of the world, that are ever hissing dispraise,  
Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,  
Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies."



## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER VII.

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"If thou art worn and hard beset  
With sorrows which thou wouldst forget,—  
If thou wouldst read a lesson that will keep  
Thy heart from fainting, and thy soul from sleep,  
Go to the woods and hills: no tears  
Dim the sweet look that nature wears."

LONGFELLOW: *Sunrise on the Hills.*

"With farmer Allan at the farm abode."

TENNYSON *Dora.*

"Horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast."

GRAY: *The Bard.*

"Thy tuwhits are lulled I wot,  
Thy tuwhoos of yester night,  
Which upon the dark afloat  
So took echo with delight,  
So took echo with delight,  
That her voice untuneful grown  
Wears all day a fainter tone !

"I would mock thy chaunt anew,  
But I cannot mimic it ;  
Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,  
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
With a lengthened loud halloo,  
Tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-O-O-O."

TENNYSON: *To the Owl.*





## CHAPTER VII.

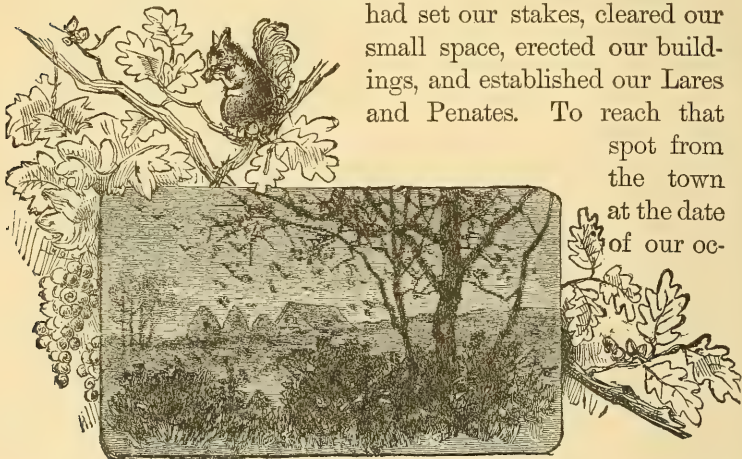
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URING all this time I had been the possessor of a farm, though, it must be confessed, 'twas a very wild, rude, and rough one; —a new farm, which, by means of hired labor, I had been for a number of years preceding the date of the incidents narrated in Chapter I. of this work, engaged in creating out of chaos, or at least carving out of a wilderness as wild as Siberian wastes.

I had purchased a piece of forest land lying some miles from the town out toward the north, a few acres of ground near the middle of which I had had cleared by contract; I had reared a small house, and, employing a man to act as farmer, while his wife filled the responsible position of housekeeper, I had begun farming in tolerably fair form. I had purchased a brindled cow, a lineal descendant of that celebrated animal reputed to have jumped over the moon; a yoke of broad-horned, awkward, but very strong and serviceable oxen constituted our team; and we had erected a log stable about the size, I suppose, of the original cabin occupied by Uncle Tom and family,—and twice as ugly. I had also engaged a wagonmaker of the village to build for me one of those old-

fashioned, two-wheeled farm-carts; and this he had made to correspond quite fairly in appearance with the team and their stable. This cart was the only wheeled vehicle in use upon the farm for several months; it constituted our freight wagon and eke our family carriage, so to speak. Later, when we had progressed far enough to own a wagon, the cart was set to one side in the farm-yard, and there it still remains, one of "the sights" of the place. It never *was* a success except as a "sight," and in that function it will hold its own with any vehicle I have ever seen, or read of. I really do not believe the old Deacon's famous "One Horse Shay" was a greater curiosity than this same cart. "Give me homely themes," says Thoreau. Here is a theme homely enough from all points of view, one would think, to suit even the hermit of Walden. The cart, as already stated, is still in existence; its horned fellow-chattels have passed away like exhalations, and the place which knew the picturesque log-stable knows it no more. Better tools, better buildings, better stock have taken the places of the first,—as was meet and necessary to keep in countenance larger and better fields.

A romantic spot it was down deep in the forest where we had set our stakes, cleared our small space, erected our buildings, and established our Lares and Penates. To reach that spot from the town at the date of our oc-



cupation, you pursued the highway a number of miles (I make the matter very definite in another chapter) and then, branching off to the left, you plunged into the dense forest and proceeded about three-fourths of a mile to the westward, over rich bottom-lands covered with a growth of oak, ash, elm and soft maple trees, under which flourished several species of wild grasses, alders, poplars and briars. The highway was a *tragedy* in those old days,\* particularly during a moist season; and the forest-road was not always in the best of humor. You may draw on your imagination, reader, for a picture of my family of farmers, the feminine unit whereof alone weighed over two hundred and ten pounds avoirdupois, when they made one of their occasional trips to town in *that cart* drawn by *those oxen*.

But we had a world of sport in those early days in "these grand old woods"! I shall never enjoy another pastime as I did this primitive sort of farming. My man, too, Gen. Allen (for you might as well be introduced forthwith to a person whose history was so intimately connected, for a number of years, with that of the farm as to be almost identical

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\*When people complain nowadays (as they sometimes will) of the condition of these ways, I quote them the couplet attributed to CAPTAIN GROSE:

"Had you but seen these roads *before they were made*  
You'd lift up your hands and bless General Wade."

In the primitive days, indeed, when we first used this highway, it often much resembled that "among the Haddams," as described by SAXE:

"Where in the mucky roads, a man  
(The road was built on Adam's plan,  
And not MacAdam's)  
Went down—down—down, one stormy night,  
And disappeared from human sight,  
All save his hat,—  
Which raised in sober minds a sense  
Of some mysterious providence  
In sparing that!"

therewith), and his wife\* both agreed that the years they spent in my employ here were the happiest of their lives. This would be the testimony of the General to-day. Mrs. Allen, alas! fulfilled her mission on earth and joined the majority some years ago.

Yes, it was a romantic spot down here deep in the greenwood,—for the circumjacent forests were verdant and fresh and fragrant in those early days, but the frequent fires that have coursed through them since have scorched and seared them until upon three sides of the farm the dead trunks of trees stand stark and stiff, like tombstones marking the place of burial of much that was grand, graceful and beautiful.

“Many a time and oft” have I ridden my pet pony “Rock” (not a “fast horse,” the boys used to say, but an “all-day horse”) over those roads, and bursting into the clearing at the top of his speed, I have startled the whole plantation with something as near resembling Indian war-whoops as aught I could manufacture. Then would my farmer-family all be glad to see me, and exhibit to me what progress in the way of “improvements” had been made since my last visit,—for the clearing was so small in those ancient days that even if I had not missed them more than a week, my crew had usually been able to make a very appreciable and substantial addition to the fields.

There was but little else to do here for a year or two except to destroy the forests, and the General always had two or more “hands” to help him, hence the work moved along swiftly and to my immense satisfaction.

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\*During her residence here Mrs. A. actually composed several poems descriptive of the farm, and expressive of her love therefor. Unfortunately the manuscripts of these have been lost. One, I remember, began:

“Oh, how I love the dear old farm!  
About whose fields there is a charm,”—etc.



Enjoy it! I just pity anybody who goes and dies, never having had an experience similar to mine with a new farm! I could scarcely attend to my regular and legitimate business in town, so eager was I to be in the midst of my force of pioneers. The boys here among the "tall timber," or the prostrate and blackened logs, used to laugh at first when they saw me appearing and beginning to handle with my thin hands "pevey," and axe, and brand. But they became accustomed to it anon, and treated it then as a matter of course.

There is no question but they liked to have me visit them. Nor could they foretell my times and seasons, for I often made my advent into the clearing long after "Night had thrown her sable mantle o'er the earth and pinned it with a star," and came swooping and whooping down upon them, waking the glad echoes in the dim aisles of the old forests. And then would the boys pour out of their board walls to meet me, while the friendly notes of the owl from down in the vague beyond,—still deeper in the woods,—would frequently be added to the General's pleasant and hearty greeting.

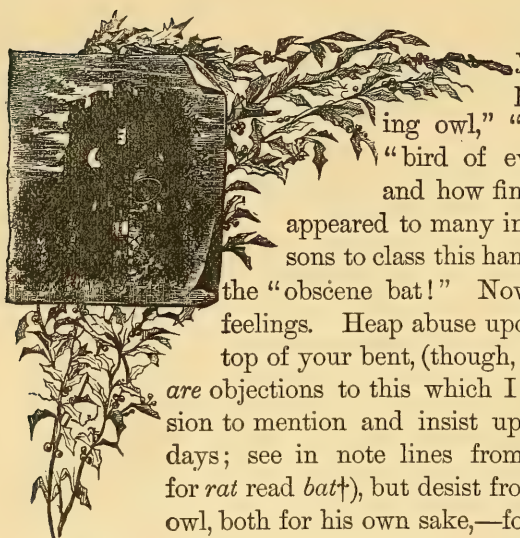
Having introduced the subject of the owl, I desire to make a short digression here in order to set right this friendly bird with what I certainly believe to be a justice-loving, if a grossly erring, public. Seldom, indeed, has this fine fowl been fairly treated either by the poets or other writers. The literature of owls, then, I would say, for the most part needs rewriting. Almost everything that you shall find in imaginative works, whether poetry or prose fiction, concerning this fowl, is pitched on a key like this:

"From yonder ivy-mantled tower  
The moping owl doth to the moon complain  
Of such as, wandering near her native bower,  
Molest her ancient solitary reign."\*

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\*GRAY'S *Elegy*.





How often do you hear the expressions, "boding owl," "uncanny fowl," "bird of evil-omen," etc.,\* and how fine a thing it has appeared to many inconsiderate persons to class this handsome bird with the "obscene bat!" Now this hurts my feelings. Heap abuse upon the bat to the top of your bent, (though, to be sure, there are objections to this which I may take occasion to mention and insist upon one of these days; see in note lines from Emerson, and for *rat* read *bat*†), but desist from traducing the owl, both for his own sake,—for he, the bird of

\*We find, however, that some among the ancients were more just; as, for example, ARISTOPHANES, who in *The Wasps* (FRERE'S Translation) has this verse:

"High o'er our head, an omen good, we saw the owlet wheel."

Some very pleasant remarks concerning this interesting bird may be found in WILSON FLAGG'S *Birds and Seasons of New England*; but they are provokingly few. The author pronounces him (generically) a "picturesque bird," speaks of our associating him with the idea of ruins (this would be more particularly the case in the old world, or the earlier settled portions of our own country) and admits that a degree of pleasure may be felt at sight of him, etc.

† "Who knows this or that?  
Hark in the wall to the rat;  
Since the world was he has gnawed;  
Of his wisdom, of his fraud  
What dost thou know?  
In the wretched little beast  
Is life and heart,  
Child and parent,  
Not without relation  
To fruitful field and sun and moon.  
What art thou? His wicked eye  
Is cruel to thy cruelty."

EMERSON: *Limits*.

Minerva, is as cleanly a bird and every way as worthy of respect, as is your eagle, the bird of Jove, barring the difference in physical prowess alone,—and for my sake, for I love him! Why, do you know, I have a much warmer feeling as well as higher respect for the poet Southey since in that singular but learned production of his pen, *The Doctor, Etc.*, I find him describing the notes of my feathered friend as one of the “wildest and sweetest of nocturnal sounds”!

Now you may laugh satirically and call this all gammon; but I tell you you err. I have been in situations where that soft and low “hoo-hoo” of the owl-music has greeted my ear when my soul has been thrilled with it,—it was in such perfect harmony with every feature of nature roundabout.

Can you not imagine such a scene?

In pleasant company, deep in the heart of continent-covering forests, you stand at their base and seem to hear

“Mighty trees  
In many a lazy syllable repeating  
Their old poetic legends to the wind.”

We will suppose it to be a fair night in June; the pale gleaming of the stars is visible directly over-head; the mild, young moon, one-fourth of her journey on her way from the east accomplished, makes her presence known to you—standing there, amid the fairy foliage forms and faint odors of the sweet woods—only by a dim, verdure-tinted radiance, which enables you barely to discern the graceful outlines of things. Just then, when your whole soul is bathed in the delicious atmosphere exhaled from this scene of nature in her repose, your ear is saluted by that soft and sweet, though wild and touchingly lonely sound, “hoo-hoo, hoo-hoo.” It does not break upon you harshly; it comes with a soothing power, and seems in keeping with everything around you. Its effect upon you is like that of the “wild uncertain’, waverin’ music of the Æolian harp that nature

plays upon in the solitude,"\* which "echoes far, far away among the recesses of your heart."

Now I desire to relate an incident in my own personal history.

Upon one occasion, in early life, I found myself a wanderer late at mirk night—

"That hour o' night's black arch the key-stane"—†

threading, "with cautious step and slow," an uncertain path that wound its serpentine way among the huge trunks and through the dense undergrowth of a "far-stretching wood." Solitary, and miles remote from human habitation, I pursued my gloomy way through "empires black with shade". The thought of the things which this dark, vast forest covered would at times force itself upon me. I endeavored to fix my mind upon the myriads of insects and smaller birds, at present for the most part silent, which had made vocal and comparatively gay, during the diurnal interval, this now so melancholy wood. A breeze stirred,

"And the forests, dark and lonely,  
Moved through all their depths of darkness."‡

I thought of the frogs, the toads,—yea, and the gliding snakes in the pools and the creeks of this wilderness. Day, I thought, has seen other life here,—the playful, leaping squirrel, the sprite-like weasel, the wily mink, the creeping marten and fisher, and the raccoon. Then there were the graceful deer;—and I couldn't keep the ugly thought away, although I had struggled hard to do so,—there were dangerous beasts in this covert, too, hundreds of them, and perhaps at this moment not far distant. The words of the Psalmist came to my mind: "Thou makest darkness and it

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\**The Shepherd in Noctes Ambrosianæ, XIX.*

†BURN'S *Tam O'Shanter*.

‡LONGFELLOW: *Hiawatha*.

is night; wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.”\* Lynxes, bears and wolves abounded here! Panthers, also, as some old hunters had recently informed me, had been seen or heard hereabout.

“ Watchful, lurking ’mid the unrustling reed,  
At these mirk hours, the wily monster lies,  
And listens oft! \* \* \*  
And frequent round him rolls his sullen eyes  
If chance his savage wrath may some weak wretch surprise.”†

The reader will perceive that a *horror* had been quietly taking possession of me all this time, and I think it is a generally admitted fact that the longer one struggles against such a feeling which he is destined at last to find irresistible, the more thorough is his subjugation when he yields. I was entirely at its mercy now, and as I moved slowly on, like Tam upon that fearful night he rode from Ayr, I found myself continually

“ Glowerin’ round wi’ prudent cares  
Lest bogles catch me unawares,”

although, to be sure, nothing supernatural was the object of *my* dread.

I saw in every old stump the up-reared, haunch-supported form of bruin! The cruel spark-emitting eyes of the lynx were discoverable in every “phosphoric crumb that lit the forest floor”!

“ Ah, I see the eyes of Pauguk  
Glare upon me in the darkness!”‡

Truly, “darkness now goggled at hell with gloating eyes.”§ Sheer fancy peopled the obscure leafy caverns on either hand with stealthy forms of huge cat-like quadrupeds, all fraught with sinister purpose against me! I was antici-

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\*Psalm CIV, 20. †COLLINS. ‡LONGFELLOW: *Hiawatha*.

§SHILLER: *Love and Intrigue*.

pating with every breath that the next moment would bring to my ear that peculiar, long-drawn-out, and most utterly dismal of all sounds, the howl of the cruel and ever-hungry wolf in pursuit of his prey, when suddenly—but let us pause a moment and philosophize a little.

Did you, reader, ever experience this sort of a feeling: You knew that something—it might be a smile, it might be a sound, it might be a person—was about to come to you,—nay, you felt it already, but it had not as yet touched the region of the senses, and your knowledge of its nearness to you was wholly mysterious?\*

It would, I think, task a pen like DeQuincey's to make the statement of this situation just as I should like to have it made,—to divide the intervals with the proper exactitude, and draw the lines with perfect perspicuity. And even DeQuincey sometimes, as in certain portions of his *Opium Eater*, wrestled with problems of this character which were somewhat too difficult for him.

Well, I was, as you will doubtless conclude, in great mental agony. Unreasonable it was — very — I admit, and I have been much ashamed every time I have thought of it since; but it was none the less actual for all that. It was a genuine horror — a night-mare horror — and anybody who has passed through one of these experiences will find little

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\*In the *Noct. Am.*, XXXIV, PROF. WILSON makes the Shepherd speak of the "shadow of a sound," which, the latter asserts, affects his mind under certain circumstances and enables him to speak the name of a stranger in his presence, which he has never heard pronounced. HOGG is said to have actually possessed this unusual endowment.

CAMPBELL in his fine poem, *Lochiel's Warning*, has the verse,

"Coming events cast their shadows before."

But probably the psychologists, or the spiritualists, will be able to explain the matter in a way to make it perfectly clear and eminently satisfactory to all interested.



difficulty in understanding my feelings at the moment I am just now describing.

Suddenly I felt that something was about to happen for my relief. I had no idea what it was, nor from what direction it would come; but never was I more certain of anything than I was that help was at hand, and this before my senses were any of them affected.

It came: and what was it? The low, soft, but wild and plaintive, and infinitely tender and touching, note of the great horned owl: "Hoo-hoo, hoo-hoo!"

God bless the dear old fellow! He was perched upon a low limb only a little distance from me, and his eyes were turned my way. It was just light enough to enable me to discern the outlines of his form against the sky which was revealed through an opening in the boughs, and I could plainly perceive that he had no dread of me, and that his greeting was given in all friendliness. I could have clasped him to my heart, I was so grateful and so glad; and as he repeated his soft and low "hoo-hoo, hoo-hoo," I burst into tears.



But that awful feeling that had had possession of me, blood-curdling and soul-freezing as it had been, was gone! That voice in the wood, whether it was the owl himself that spoke, or a blessed spirit that spoke through him, had produced a wonderful effect upon me,—a total revulsion of feeling had occurred, and my perturbed spirits were presently restored to their wonted calm. Neither prowling wolves, nor stealthy lynxes, nor gliding snakes, had longer any terrors for me, and love and admiration for the "bird of wisdom" took deep root in my heart.

Do you remember that little dialect poem (by Col. Hay, I believe) of *Tilman Joy*, which tells how the old man re-

turned to his home from the war bringing with him a colored boy who, once upon a time, when Joy had fallen wounded upon the field, had saved his life at the imminent risk of losing his own, and not without having, as Tilman himself expresses it, "his black hide riddled with balls". At home the somewhat fastidious gentry there resident, took it into their heads to send the boy out of the community, and, as it appears, "met and passed resolutions" to that effect. The old man comes among them at the meeting and "speaks his little piece," relating how he had lain there on the ground, under the murderous fire of the enemy, his life oozing out with his blood, and with no thought of any earthly relief, when, of a sudden, he felt himself lifted and borne rapidly away to a place of safety. "'Twas that boy — that Tim!" he exclaims; and then he warns his neighbors:

"You may *resolute* till the cows come home,—  
But if any of you touches the boy,  
He will wrastle his hash to-night in hell,  
Or my name's not Tilman Joy!"

Hurrah for old Tilman Joy, say I!

But that's the way I feel about the owl. 'Tis a personal hurt to me when you slander this bird, as many of you, my brethren, have done. Therefore, gentlemen of the quill! please don't do it any more!

I would add further, that, although I have a little native talent in the way of limning, and have devoted some time to learning to draw with a pencil, the only achievements of mine in this line which have both satisfied myself and won me the applause of my friends are my figures of the great horned owl.

Years hence, when it comes time to adopt a coat-of-arms to have painted upon my coach and embroidered upon the livery of my servants, I have quite decided that the device shall be the figure of an owl surrounded by a wreath of oak-leaves, and the legend underneath shall read: "Hoo-hoo, hoo-hoo."

But to resume. Then when morning came with what jollity I joined the crew on their outward march to their labors! with what hilarity I seized an axe and with what audacity assailed the Titans of the wood! with what "devilish glee" I pursued my work of destruction until the boys opened wide their eyes in astonishment, or I was forced by fatigue and—blisters, to desist! And you'll credit the story when I relate that it was with a gusto not understood by the "pampered pets of society" that I assisted in demolishing the various plain and substantial edibles set before us by the good, but equally plain and substantial housekeeper, when

"At noon we returned from the field."

Ah, those were red-letter days to me! and I really grew young for a few seasons. Wholesome exercise of the character described, coupled with enthusiasm, was the elixir which gave me back my youth with its health and strength, its sweet sleep and its golden dreams!

Now I have little hope of making the average reader understand all this, for there are few who can be interested in such enterprises as these. I write this chapter partly for the benefit of that very limited number of cultivated persons left in the world who, at one period or another of their lives, have developed a genuine enthusiasm for some sort of work; and partly with the hope that it may have some *scientific value!*

But my visits to the farm, though frequent, were seldom of great duration. An hour in some instances, and at most five or six hours, was usually as much of daylight as I could give them. There were rare occasions, however, when I remained the livelong day upon the farm. When such an event occurred it usually happened that the General and I would take a long tramp through the woods, exploring the wilder and more remote portions of the estate. It was dur-

ing one of these exploring expeditions,—not, however, this time in company with the “boss”,—that I drove up a wild turkey, the only one I ever happened to see in this portion of the commonwealth. Game was not very abundant hereabouts, even in those earlier days; and it must appear a singular circumstance that this region should have remained so new and wild, lying, as it does, close to a county-town with a history of some thirty years, and one, too, which had long since begun to assume metropolitan airs. At the date of which I now write portions of my tract presented as fresh and untamed an appearance as though the foot of white man had never trod here. And to me 'twas

“A woodland enchanted!  
But by no sadder spirit  
Than blackbirds and thrushes,  
That whistled to cheer it  
All day in the bushes,  
That woodland was haunted!”\*

Here we go again! Really and truly do I regret the dance I have led the kind and patient reader in this chapter. I had promised myself, and as good as promised him, that I would pursue a straightforward course herein, and pack the paragraphs of these particular pages with valuable information, interlarded with such thin layers of wisdom, in reflections and quotations, as I could command; and so had I fully intended to perform, when, a subject coming up which touched my feelings, off I went pell-mell, into that absurd episode of the owl! Well, well; perchance I may learn to do better presently. I think already I discern signs of improvement in my habits and practices as a writer—although it must be conceded that these are far too few and faint—and I deem that by the time I shall have reached the seventh volume of this history all danger of the

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\*LOWELL.

reader's being subjected to the annoyance of these digressions will have ceased. Forgive my offences, dearest and best of perusers, even to the measure of "seventy times seven," and—I will undertake to perform my part so that ample opportunity shall be afforded you.

If you will peruse the next chapter you will find certain matters therein of record which are not generally known.





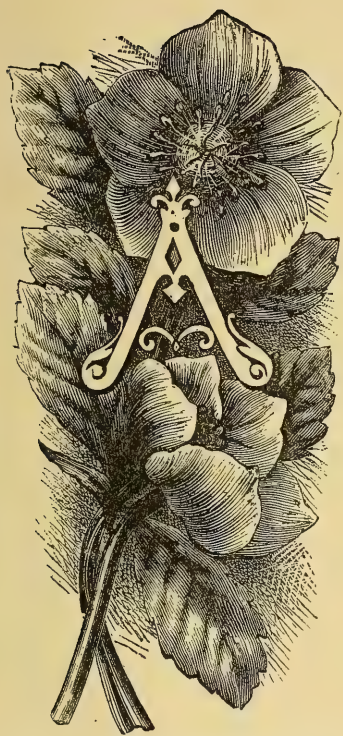
## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER VIII.

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“There the turtles alight, and there  
Feeds with her fawn the timid doe ;  
There when the winter woods are bare  
Walks the wolf on the crackling snow.”  
BRYANT.

“The mildest mangered man  
That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat.”  
BYRON.

“At once there rose so wild a yell,  
Within that dark and narrow dell,  
As all the fiends from heaven that fell  
Had pealed the banner cry of hell !”  
SCOTT.



## CHAPTER VIII.

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It was remarked in the preceding chapter, game has never been abundant in my forest since my earliest acquaintance therewith. At different times, however, we have almost daily for weeks together been favored with a visit from a solitary male deer, which grew quite tame and friendly after he seemed to have become convinced, from the treatment he was accorded, that our farmers wished him well. Efforts to kill or capture such visitants have seldom been made by the boys at the farm, this

being, as has been well understood, in consonance with my wish.

One season a fine doe accompanied by her fawn acquired the habit of leaping the hedge which divided the meadow from the forest, and cropping the tender grass and young grain in the field. All of these gentle animals subsequently fell victims to some of the numerous hunters who, in those years, infested these parts.

No taint of the hunter's instinct can, I think, be traced in my composition. A far more pleasing sight to me is the gentle doe with her tender young by her side, grace-

fully sporting and feeding at her own sweet will in the wildwood, than would be her bloody form, stiff and cold in death, lying at my feet, and brought there by a well-directed bullet sped by my own rifle.

I know what I am about to say will be unpopular, and am equally aware that the sentiment is unfashionable; but the truth must come out: Pliny, the Younger, is just my *beau idéal* of a sportsman. The following letter to his friend Tacitus, the historian, written only the other day—that is to say, a couple of thousand years, or so, ago—will illustrate the character of the writer thereof, and at the same time give the reader an idea of the sort of hunter I am. The easy style and modern sound of these sentences (translated from the elegant Latin of the original) are quite remarkable.

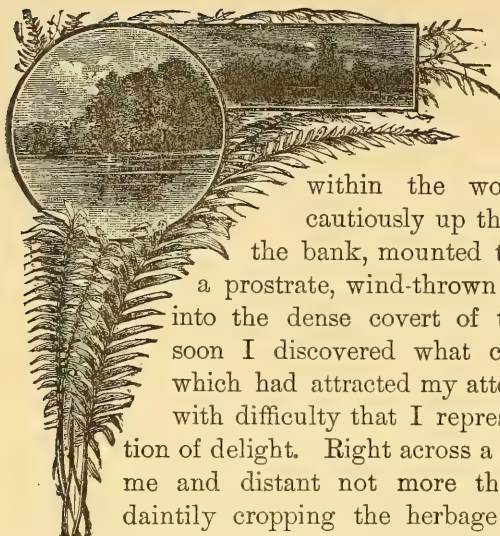
“You will laugh [writes Pliny] and laugh you may. Your old friend whom you know so well has captured three magnificent boars. What, Pliny? you will say. Yes, Pliny; without, however, abandoning my indolent habits and love of repose. The nets were spread, and I sat close to them, but instead of a boar-spear or javelin, I was armed with my pen and note-book. I mused and put down my thoughts on paper. For I had made up my mind that if I had to return with my hands empty, my note-book should be full. There is no reason why you should despise this way of studying. You cannot conceive how much bodily exercise contributes to the imagination. Besides the solitude of the woods around you, and the perfect silence which is observed in hunting, strongly inclines the mind to thought. For the future, when you go hunting, let me advise you to take with you your papers, as well as a basket and a bottle of wine. You will then find that Minerva haunts the mountains quite as much as Diana. Farewell.”\*

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\**Epistle* XVI.

Now is that not delightful! And here is a hunter after my own heart! Sit there did he, near the nets, his mind a thousand miles away, and allowed the boars, if they chose to do so, to come and snare themselves. He was equally and perfectly content whether they came or not! Then the *naïvete* with which he gives his friend Tacitus advice as to the conduct of future hunting expeditions! The humor of all this is irresistible.

I have now in mind to relate a little anecdote concerning an early experience of the writer in deer-stalking—an affair that will parallel the incident recorded in Pliny's epistle, and something that never leaked out before. I borrowed a rifle of my brother one day, when a boy, and by invitation joined a company of Nimrods who were going out with hounds to "run deer," as the technical and laconic phrase is. We passed down the stream (the beautiful Tittabawassee was the river) and I was assigned a "run-way" (*i. e.*, a deer's pathway to the stream) upon the heavily-timbered flats of the west side. There I sat, pursuant to careful instructions, very quietly for a period as long as fifteen or twenty minutes, my piece cocked, my eyes open, almost breathlessly awaiting the advent of the *game*. It didn't come; and the pastime grew monotonous to me. I arose and looked about to see whether I might, peradventure, catch a glimpse of dog, hunter, or deer. I saw nothing. Then I listened for the baying of the "deep-mouthed hounds in the depths of the woods"; but not a "bay" could I hear. Then I leaned my rifle against a thorn bush which grew near the bank of the stream, and began to divert myself by picking up pebbles from the beach and making them "skip" across the rippled stream. This afforded very excellent amusement for a while, but I tired of it presently, and strolled carelessly down the beach, picking up small shells and pebbles, when of a sudden I became conscious of a slight but peculiar sound just



over the bank—  
here a little higher than my head—and apparently a short distance within the woods. I crawled cautiously up the turf terrace of the bank, mounted the huge trunk of a prostrate, wind-thrown elm, and peered into the dense covert of the forest. Very soon I discovered what caused the sound which had attracted my attention, and it was with difficulty that I repressed an exclamation of delight. Right across a little bayou from me and distant not more than thirty yards, daintily cropping the herbage that grew upon a verdant knoll, was a fine yearling doe. The exquisitely beautiful creature had not observed me, and for several minutes I sat motionless enjoying the picture. How graceful those limbs! That slender, willowy neck! How large and lustrous those glorious eyes!

Why didn't I shoot? Shoot her! Why, you Vandal! You worse than savage! Shoot that delicate, fairy-like thing! Not if I had had a whole arsenal at my command!\*

I didn't have a single thought of attempting to kill the animal. I was merely sitting there ("like a bump on a

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\*The author is in good company here. In HOWITT's pleasant *Book of the Seasons* we find the following paragraph:

"Who would not find a greater gratification in watching the happy and undestructive habits of a timid little creature than in shooting it, or worrying it with dogs " P. 223, 5th London Ed.

THOREAU says: "No humane being, past the thoughtless age of boyhood, will wantonly murder any creature which holds its life by the same tenure that he does. The hare in its extremity cries like a child."  
— *Walden*.



log," as my discoverer afterwards more forcibly than poetically described it) mute with delight and admiration, when a crackling in the brush to the right sent my timid beauty flying deep into the forest, and brought me to my wits and my feet.

"Was that a deer?" demanded the harsh voice of one of the hunters who had come out with me.

"Ye-es," I stammered.

"Why didn't you shoot?" He asked this question a little impatiently.

"Why, why," I answered in confusion, "I didn't have my gun here."

"Where is it?"

The truth is that I had forgotten all about the gun, and it was still standing leaning against the thorn bush some twenty perches up the stream. And, will you believe it? that man was actually angry with me. He abused me ferociously—and he had always been one of my very best friends, too. "You'll never make a hunter!" was the assertion, positively delivered, with which he concluded his tirade.

That was an unkind cut! A hunter! Hadn't I found? and, as it transpired, wasn't I the only one of the entire crew that went out who did find a deer that day? And therefore do I still insist that I am not only a hunter, but a remarkably successful one. As to being a *butcher*, that is quite another matter.

But then and there I bribed the man by whose presence I had been so rudely interrupted, not to publish my disgrace abroad; and he has proved honorable enough to perform as he promised. I had supposed that no one would ever learn of this affair from me; and, kind reader, I am only relating this to you on condition, honest Indian, now! that you never "give me away to the boys."

I did once discharge a rifle at a deer; but it was unavoidable. The deer was there wading in the creek. I held



the gun in the bow of the canoe; my companion at the stern — much older than I — cried "Shoot! shoot!" I fired. No harm was done, and I was aware from the first that none would be done by me. I was well enough pleased with the results, and my prompt

obedience to the word of command had met the approval of my companion.

Had I the making of the game laws of the country, and then could I oblige somebody else to enforce them, I should soon come to be considered rather tyrannical by sportsmen, I fear. In the first place, when I had a semi-domesticated deer, to which I had grown attached, and which I had put forth an effort to make fat and fair by allowing him to pasture upon my succulent young grain and grass, intending, when he died (of old age) to give him to the poor (crows), or else give him decent interment, it should be unlawful and a misdemeanor for anyone to enter upon my territory with intent even to scare that deer,\* and a capital offense to shoot at him.

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\*So far as this gentle animal is concerned I feel something of the sentiment expressed by BURNS in the following stanza from his poem, *To a Mouse*:

"I'm truly sorry man's dominion  
Ha' broken nature's social union,  
An' justifies that ill opinion  
Which makes thee startle  
At me, thy poor earth-born companion  
An' fellow-mortal."

Neither is it pleasing to me to have my quails and partridges massacred by ruthless men and wanton boys, who according to my view fail to fill their own place in the world as gracefully and as well as these innocent birds fill theirs. But when I discover sportsmen traversing my fields and wickedly destroying the smaller birds,

“The street-musicians of the heavenly city.”\*

then my sense of outrage makes itself felt and the silence is broken to some purpose.

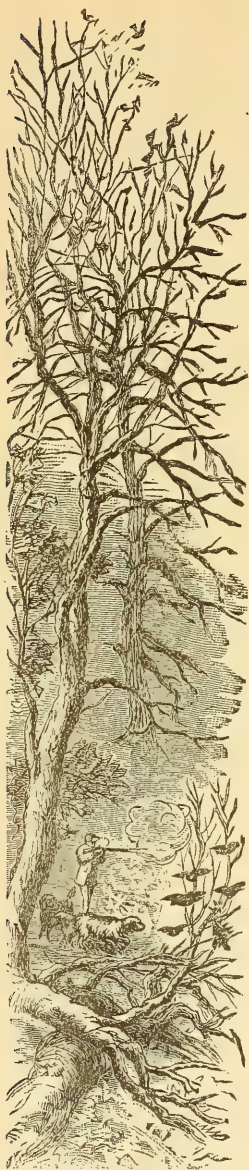
I protest again that I do not, cannot, and never shall comprehend the heart of a sportsman! You snare some partridges which you need for your dinner, and proceed to kill them by wringing off their heads, whereby they die quickly and with the minimum of pain. Your sportsman friend stands by and cries out indignantly, “’tis murder!” Presently his dog flushes a covey of quails in the open; he fires, kills one outright, perhaps, and wounds one or two others which ultimately escape him. He has done a glorious deed, whereof he afterwards boasts among his companions.

Yet these men are not all, or at all times, thus insane, or wanting in susceptibility. Witness the following, which we copy from the writings of that ardent sportsman, W. P. Hawes:

“If you would see the purest, the sincerest, the most affecting piety of a parent’s love, startle a family of young quails and watch the conduct of the mother. She will not leave you, no, not she. But she will fall at your feet, uttering a noise which none but a distressed mother can make, and she will run, and flutter, and seem to try to be caught, and cheat your out-stretched hand, and affect to be wing-broken, wounded, and yet have just enough strength to tumble along, until she has drawn you fatigued to a safe

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\*LONGFELLOW.



distance from her threatened children, and the hopes of her young heart; and then she will mount, whirring with glad strength, and away through the maze of trees you had not seen before, like a close shot bullet, flies to her skulking infants. Listen now! Do you hear those three half-plaintive notes, quickly and clearly poured out? She is calling the boys and girls together. She sings not now 'Bob White!' nor, 'ah! Bob White!' That is her husband's love-call, or his trumpet-blast of defiance. But she calls sweetly and softly for her lost children. Hear them 'peep, peep, peep' at the welcome voice of their mother's love. They are coming together. Soon the whole family will meet again. It is a foul sin to disturb them; but retread your devious way, and let her hear your coming footsteps breaking down the briers as you renew the danger. She is quiet, not a word is passed between the fearful fugitives. Now if you have the heart to do it, lie low, keep still, and imitate the call of the hen quail. Oh, mother, mother! how your heart would die if you could witness the deception! The little ones raise up their trembling heads and catch comfort and imagined safety from the sound. 'Peep, peep!' They are com-



ing, seem to say: 'Where is she? Mother, mother! We are here!'

Now it is difficult to believe that one who can write like that is wholly wicked. And yet this man Hawes was from center to circumference,

"From turret to foundation stone,"

a sportsman!

Listen also to Frank Forester:

"I had found [writes Herbert, in one of his numerous works descriptive of field sports] a bevy of thirteen birds [quails] in an orchard, close to a house in which I was passing a portion of the autumn, and in a very few minutes killed twelve of them; it was perfectly open shooting. The thirteenth and last bird, rising with two others which I killed right and left, flew but a short distance, and dropped among some sumacs in a corner of a rail fence. I could have shot him certainly enough, but some undefined feeling\* inclined me to call my dog to halt and spare his little life; and yet, afterwards I almost regretted what I certainly intended at the time for mercy. For day after day, so long as I remained in the country, I heard his sad call 'from morn till dewy eve,' crying for his departed friends, and full, apparently, of memory, which is, also, too often but another name for sorrow!"

Of course, then, says the kind-hearted reader, Mr. Herbert, who writes so feelingly and so regretfully of this truly sad affair, gave over his diabolically destructive habits, and never shot another quail so long as he lived!

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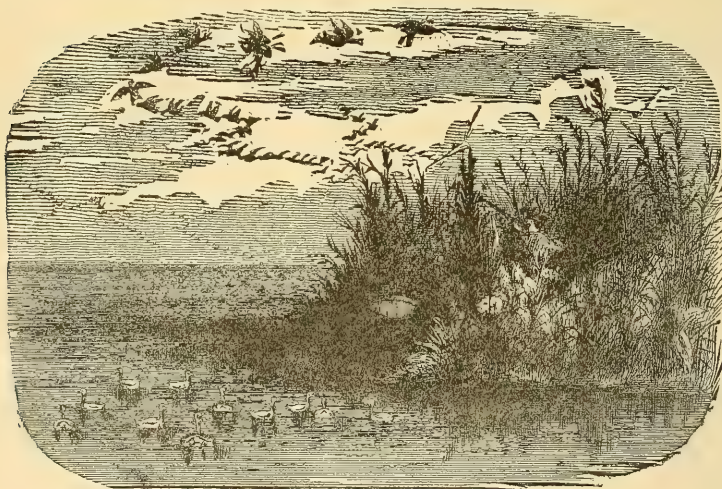
\*"Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all,  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sickled o'er with the pale cast of thought;  
And enterprises of great pith and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry  
And lose the name of action."—SHAKESPEARE.



Gave over nothing! He shot no more quails until—another opportunity offered, and then his murderous fowling-piece spoke promptly in its accustomed tones, and the little feathered innocents fell dead to earth; or, if conscience so interfered with skill that the poor bird escaped unscathed of lead, and only half frightened to death by the explosion, Mr. Herbert was heartily ashamed of himself for his lack of success!

But the last-named writer thus moralizes upon the infatuation of the sportsman:

"It is a singular proof [he says] how strong is the passion for the chase and the love of pursuit implanted by nature in the heart of man [some men], that however much, when not influenced by the direct heat of sport, we deprecate the killing of these little birds, and pity the incidental sufferers, the moment the dog points and the bevy springs, or the propitious morning promises good sport, all the compunction is forgotten in the eagerness and emulation which are natural to our race."



Oh, gentle race of murderers!\* Precisely so much can be said for human lust of all names! But so far as regards the confiding birds of these gentle kinds which seek a home in my fields and woody coverts, I say to all sportsmen in the language of Bismarck: "Hands off!"

There are several species of animals native here which I surrender up to the tender mercies of the Nimrods sans remonstrance or remorse. There is the so-called wild-cat, the raccoon, the fox, the *Mephitis Americana*, the porcupine, the wood-chuck, and even (but not without a pang) "poor puss," the rabbit. Now, that is a handsome list, and by such concession will be seen my desire to be fair and to deal justly even by a class for which I have so little sympathy and (shall I say it) respect as I have for our sportsmen. Then shall anybody feel disposed to shoot those marauders the hen-hawks, or even the sable-hued crows, I shall not interfere, because, as I hold, self-preservation demands such sacrifice.

As for wolves, I have never seen one in this vicinity, although their doleful noise has been heard from my door on two or three occasions, and a solitary prowler hereabout has sometimes attracted the eye of a neighbor. Anyone, however, wishing to put an end to the life of a creature so

\*In prescribing rules for using live frogs for baiting fish, in the *Complete Angler*, old IZAAK WALTON directs to introduce the barbed hook into the body of the victim through the muzzle, and that the frog may live as long as possible, to "*treat him as if you loved him!*" This atrocity gives BYRON occasion to observe concerning the author:

"The quaint, old cruel coxcomb in his gullet  
Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it."

Better far is WORDSWORTH's humanitarianism:

"Never to blend our pleasure, or our pride,  
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels!"

cruel, so cowardly, and every way so ignoble as the gray wolf, has my full and free consent to indulge himself in the pastime whenever he shall find it convenient. And in the same category with the wolf I include that Ishmaelite of our woods, the lynx, of which a stray specimen is sometimes seen here.



WINTER SCENERY AT OAKFIELDS.—APPROACH TO UPPER BEAVER MEADOW.—  
A PROWLER.



But for bruin I entertain a good deal of respect—of a certain kind! Personally I should not like to inflict a wanton and unprovoked injury upon this sagacious and grimly-humorous quadruped.

Those who have observed our native black bear where he has been kept in confinement till he has become tame and *moderately* gentle, will, I think, be disposed to acknowledge that the adjectives with which above I have coupled his name, are not misplaced. He *is* sagacious,\* and if he has not a sense of humor about him, I have either failed to make correct observations upon his character, or my deductions therefrom have been sadly at fault.

Bears have been seen hereabout nearly every season since I have occupied the farm. Yea, the very month I purchased it, and when I surveyed it for the first time, traversing all its forests and beaver-meadows for that purpose, I found what are technically known as “bear-signs” almost everywhere. Paths made by the flat, ugly feet of this animal crossed each other upon every rood of land. Every live oak had been visited, and small boughs which had been bitten off by the sharp teeth of bruin and dropped where the acorns upon them could be more handily gathered, strewed the ground under many a tree. Dozens or scores of these brutes at a time must have been busily employed here.

But we had a bear of our own, at least we so considered him, at an early day in the history of our farming operations here. The General pronounced him “an old snifter!” and that is precisely what he was—I guess! Yes, you may believe he was no second-rate affair! His “hair was like

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\*“It is a shame to kill a bear, except, indeed, for his creech and skin.. He’s an affectionate creature among his kith and kin—in the bosom of his own family, sagawcious and playful—no sae rouch in his mind as his mainners—a good husband, a good son, a good father.”—*The Shepherd, in Noctes Ambrosianæ*, XLIX.

the raven's wing." (That last sentence was taken bodily from the latest novel.) His feet were large and expressive. (I copied a portion of that sentence from a book by Mrs. Southworth; the rest is of home manufacture.) "List, list, oh, list!" (that's what Shakespeare said upon a certain exciting occasion) while I

"A tale unfold whose lightest word  
Will harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,  
Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres,  
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,  
And each particular hare to stand on end  
Like a hedgehog!"\*

Now, reader, there's trouble a-*bruin*; but don't get excited, and don't, for mercy's sake, make me nervous at this trying juncture by attempting any pun! (you remember what the Autocrat has to say about "upsetting whole freight-trains of conversation for the sake of a battered witticism") and you have my promise that if it be a harrowing tale, it shall not be a long one, for it is the *tale of a bear*.

'And if you find it wondrous short  
It cannot hold you long.'†

If you think you can bear it, we will now begin.

#### THE BARE STORY.

"Bear with me;  
My heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar  
And I must *paws*!"‡

The name of one of the men (we had a crew of five or six men and boys at that time) who worked for us during the second year of our occupation of the farm, was Basil. He officiated as chore-boy. A part of his duty was to take care of a couple of colts pasturing upon the wild and par-

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\*Modified SHAKESPEARE.

†GOLDSMITH.

‡SHAKESPEARE mutilated.



tially brush-covered meadow below the barn, and beyond the line of our "improvements." One day along in the autumn Basil took a measure of oats and set off to feed the colts, which, as he supposed, were feeding down beyond a little skirt of poplar and alder bushes. He whistled for his pets, but they did not appear; then he walked slowly down toward the bushes still whistling and calling: "Come Queen! come Princess!" They didn't come, however, and Basil proceeded as far as the edge of the brushwood, and thinking he heard equine footsteps approaching from the southwest, he turned that way and walked carelessly along, still whistling and calling.

Let's see; you remember Macaulay's lines:

"All shrank, like boys who, unaware,  
Ranging the woods to start a hare,  
Come to the mouth of the dark lair,  
Where, growling low, a fierce old bear  
Lies amidst bones and blood!"

Well, these verses will represent with sufficient accuracy for all practical purposes the situation of the poor chore-boy when he had rounded the corner of that patch of bushes. There were no bones and blood visible, however, and the bear when discovered was not lying, (or else Basil *was* when he gave in his account of the adventure, and that I couldn't bear to believe—pshaw! I must make



haste and wind up this yarn or I shall get it so tangled that it never can be unraveled!), but there, full in his pathway not ten feet distant, it was, and to the excited imagination of the astonished chore-boy,

"Black it stood as night!  
Fierce as ten furies! terrible as hell!  
And shook ——"

Hold hard, there! The bear didn't shake, so far as the evidence shows; it was his *vis-a-vis* who did the shaking.

But Basil didn't stop long *there* to shake! Let's see again; what is it the author last quoted has to say about the *gentry who fell*, when upon a certain occasion some unusual occurrence stirred their feelings?

“At once the universal host upsent  
A shout which tore hell's concave, and beyond  
Frighted the reign of Chaos and Old Night.”

That's it, is it not? And what that nest of devils did was about what poor distraught Basil did. His yell, when he found himself hob-nobbing with that grim monster of the wilds, was heard to the uttermost parts of the farm, and the housekeeper afterward declared that it had jarred the windows of the dwelling!

“Shook the arsenal and fulmin'd over Greece,  
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne,”

as it were. Then he turned toward the house and incontinently fled, sowing his oats wildly as he went!

The bear survived the adventure, and was afterward seen at sundry times and in divers places hereabout, and even reappeared (at least we always believed it to be the old and not a new one) the next summer. We gather from these circumstances that he felt no hardness toward any one upon the farm by reason of what had occurred. For aught I know both the bear and the chore-boy are still alive, and here's hoping that they may each continue to flourish even to a green old age!

That's about all there is of the *bare* story; and, to tell the literal truth, I, for one, am heartily glad of it; for that bear had been fast becoming such a bore that he could not much longer have been borne!

Now just a little word with you, reader, ere I close this chapter: For the first time since we set out together I have

been really ashamed of you. To allow yourself to become so excited over such a very trivial matter as the little adventure I have been describing! 'Tis positively disgraceful! One thing at least I am resolved upon,—you hear no more bear stories from me.

Pass to the next chapter.



## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER IX.



"It is only in solitude that the genius of eminent men has been formed. There their first thoughts sprang."

D'ISRAELI.

"Silence is thus a novelty; and a sympathy with forms of nature, and with phenomena of light, or twilight, is heightened by its contrast with ordinary experience. Besides, one likes to stand out alone before himself, \* \* \* in life he is acting and acted upon. A throng of excitements are spurring him through various rapid races. Self-consideration is almost lost. He scarcely knows what of himself is himself, and what is but the workings of others upon him. It is good, now and then, to sit by one's self, as if all the world were dead, and see what is left of that which glowed and raged along the arena. We are out of temptation, out of excitement. In the loom we are the shuttle, beaten back and forth, carrying the thread of affairs out of which grows the fabric of life. Slip the band; stop the loom. What is the thread? What is the fabric?"

H. W. BEECHER.



## CHAPTER IX.

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WITH the general question, so much mooted, which is preferable, city or country life, I desire not at this time to meddle. I am free to admit that for many people the numbers, noise and activity of the town are so much conditions precedent of happiness, and their training has been such, that existence would be worthless to them in another state; while, I doubt not, it will be as readily conceded by most reasonable persons, that many people there are so constituted by nature, and so warped by their mental and physical habits, that the crush and rumble, the multitude and the busy whirl of a city would be so repugnant, and the cool sequestration of the rural life so inviting and grateful, that their proper home is in retirement. But my difficulty remains as before.

The question with me is this: For myself, with mental and moral environments as they actually exist,—my disposition, endowments, acquirements, tastes, habits,—is it desirable that I shall deliberately dis sever myself from the “busy haunts of men,” and seek leisure for study, contemplation



and composition,—seek rest from care and labor,—seek solace for disappointed hopes and ambitions (if I happen to have such),—seek gratification of my love of ease, and my taste for the delightful things of nature,—in rural seclusion?

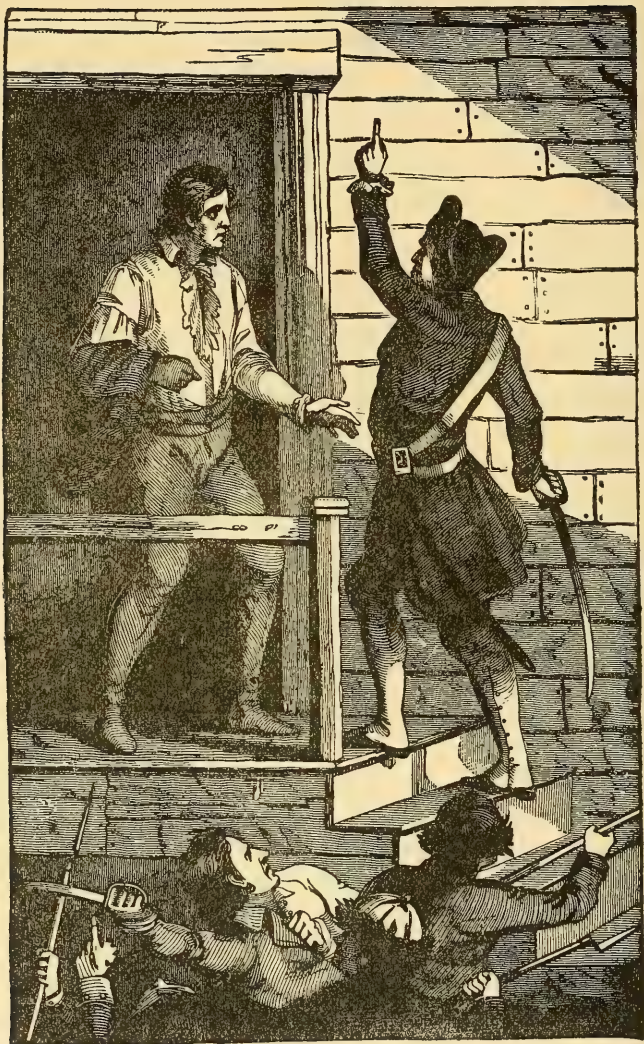
There is, if I see it aright, a matter connected with the one under consideration which may complicate it somewhat, but which can by no means be slighted. My own fate in life *may* be so linked with that of others as to modify the result of this investigation to a large extent. We will not admit this disturbing factor at the present juncture, however, but leave it to be taken up further along.

The question having been stated, then, it becomes us, in the first instance, to inquire as to who and what is this *I* for whose benefit it is proposed to be discussed. Waiving all considerations which diffidence might suggest, not forgetting either that many of the things I am about to confess are not altogether flattering to the author, but keeping ever in mind the *ipse dixit* of a wise writer, to-wit: that “no picture of life can have any veracity [and, hence, any value] that does not admit the *odious* facts”,\* the question may be answered briefly thus: I am not precisely (we will suppose) as Burton described Democritus, “a little wearish old man”,† but small in stature, like Pope, and delicate from youth, and one, at least, who has arrived at that indefinite period of life known as middle-age. I am purely a bundle of nerves (we will further suppose) like Voltaire, or that Pascal whose anonymous letters so wrought up the feelings of the Jesuits in France during the seventeenth century; or like Charles Lamb; or like DeQuincey without his opium; or like Randolph of Roanoke. Shy and reserved am I, as was Wordsworth, Collins, or our own Hawthorne; gentle as Addison or Irving; whimsical as Rabelais, or Godwin who wrote *Caleb Williams*, or Matt. Lewis, author of *The Monk*; quiet

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\*EMERSON: *Essay, Fate.* †*Anat. of Mel.*

externally, notwithstanding the nerves, which was a marked characteristic of Henry Clay and of Neckar; as peace-loving as Penn, Whittier, or any other Quaker,—which disposition I come naturally enough by, being a descendant from the Friends on my father's side. I am studious, and almost as much of a book-lover as was Macaulay, and have been, as that General Allen, who captured Fort Ticonderoga so early one fine morning, ("in the name of the great Jehovah and the Continental Congress!"), confessed himself, a devourer of books, but to little purpose, as all have been used immethodically,—yea, a vast number of volumes! I am indolent as was the poet Thompson by report, or Montaigne by confession; affectionate as was Shelley, or Dick Steele, or Dr. Johnson; sometimes facetious and given to laughter more genial than that of Democritus, and again am plunged in melancholy, but fail to weep as readily or as copiously as did Heraclitus, and most resemble him who wrote the *Anatomy*. I am as great a lover of nature, though not one-half so good an observer, as was Prof. Wilson; of careless business habits, and as cordially detest the details of the counting-room, and stiff formalities and conventionalities of every name and nature, as did Goldsmith, or Gay, or Sheridan, or Savage. I am a victim of vanity, which was a failing of Cicero, of Benton the American and Canning the English statesman, of Lamartine, and, as I deem, of Carlyle. I am no epicure, in which respect I resemble the great Alexander, the greater Napoleon, as well as Emerson and some others of that remarkable eastern brotherhood of transcendent and transcendental interpreters of nature. I have a disposition to be strictly just toward all men, and for a possessor of this quality to make comparison by, I need not go to Aristides, nor indeed look further than to my own father. I am a sincere lover of my friends, a trait upon owning which Brutus prided himself. I have little taste for general society, in which I resemble Zeno and Thoreau, the philosophers,—two men, by the way, not so wide apart in certain other things as the



THE SUMMONS TO SURRENDER.

antipodes. I am rather easily persuaded in practical affairs by those in whom I have confidence, which weakness was also possessed by, or, rather, possessed Coleridge; am not at all revengeful, but would gladly avoid *in toto* a person with whom I have had a misunderstanding,—which, it is said, was a strongly marked character of George the First of America,—*videlicet*, “the first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen!”

Here then, loose enough it is true in the statement, are a few of the qualities as I see them, which go to make up the character of the being I denominate myself. And perhaps the catalogue is sufficiently extended and complete to enable us to reach a decision of the somewhat important question proposed, if it be possible in this manner ever to arrive at one. It will be noticed that I am made up of the weaknesses and defects of nearly all the noted men that ever lived, and to balance these, how few qualities of the opposite description!

“Truth that is I. ‘What I?’

*I per se*, I. ‘Great I, you would say!’ No;  
Great I indeed *you* well may say; but I  
Am little i,—the least of all the row!”\*

But after all I cannot assert that from the likeness drawn a stranger would experience no difficulty in identifying the writer. All these characteristics I certainly seem to possess; but I am profoundly impressed with the truth expressed in the following lines of Montaigne’s:

“Whoever will look narrowly into his own bosom [says our author] will hardly find himself twice in the same condition. I give my soul sometimes one face, sometimes another, according to the side I turn her to. If I speak variously of myself, it is because I consider myself variously. All contrarieties are there to be found in one corner or another. Bashful, insolent, chaste, lustful, prating, silent,

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\*DAVIES.



laborious, delicate, ingenious, heavy, melancholic, pleasant, lying, true, knowing, ignorant, liberal, courteous and prodigal! I find all these in myself more or less, according as I turn myself about. \* \* In a word, I have nothing to say of myself entirely, simply and solidly, without mixture and confusion."\*

Now, then, (if we are to proceed) where on earth shall such a creature as I have here depicted find his most fitting habitation?

I pause only to entreat the reader not to judge me a hideous, hapless and hopeless monster from the anatomization of my mental and moral constitution here given. I am not quite that, I hope. There are some who respect me, as I verily believe, and a few, I think, who love. And be not harsh, nor hint sarcastically that some things had better been left unsaid, that

"Nature sometimes makes one up  
Of such sad odds and ends,  
It really might be just as well  
Hushed up among one's friends."†

In this instance it could not be. We are desirous of conducting an important investigation here. The elicitation of truth is our object. It became necessary to have all the facts; and I felt it incumbent upon me, so far as it lay within my power, to furnish them. The facts are precisely what you see. I have endeavored to make the analysis as complete as possible. "Naught have I extenuated," nor yet have I "set down aught in malice."

Perhaps it will be as well—to make apology once for all time for aught like an appearance of egotism in the present or any other chapter of this book—to say right at this point (as the circumstances do well authorize me) with Thoreau: "I should not talk so much of myself if there were anybody else whom I knew as well. Unfortunately I am confined to this theme by the narrowness of my experience."‡

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\* *Essays*, Chap. XLV.    † HOLMES    ‡ *Walden*.



If I have not mistaken my lineaments and have drawn the portrait accurately, it will be seen that in several important respects I resemble the poet Cowper. I speak without vanity in this instance. I may resemble the sweet bard most in my defects; and this is probably pretty nearly the truth of the matter. *He* was morbidly sensitive, shy, reserved,—*he* was unworldly, affectionate, studious, melancholy, whimsical.

It was Cowper, in his retirement, who wrote:

“ And God gives to every man  
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,  
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall  
Just in the niche he was ordained to fill.  
To the deliverer of an injured land  
He gives a tongue to enlarge upon, a heart  
To feel, and courage to redress its wrongs;  
To monarchs dignity; to judges sense;  
To artists ingenuity and skill;  
To me an unambitious mind, content  
In the low vale of life, that early felt  
A wish for ease and leisure, and erelong  
Found here that leisure and that ease I wished.”\*

And there in his seclusion, at the home of kind Mrs. Urwin, I do suppose this gentle being was as happy as his poor health and melancholy disposition would have allowed him to be anywhere upon the broad bosom of the good, green earth. It might have been said at one time that the author possessed a little of the misanthropic spirit of the bard who wrote:

“I have not loved the world, nor the world me;  
I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bowed  
To its idolatries a patient knee,—  
Nor coined my cheek to smiles—nor cried aloud  
In worship of an echo; in the crowd  
They could not deem me one of such; I stood  
Among them, but not of them; in a shroud  
Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still could  
Had I not filled my mind, which thus itself subdued.”†

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\**The Task.*      †BYRON: *Childe Harold*.

But that would have been a great while ago. There is nothing of the man-hater, nor of the world-hater in my composition at the present time. It may be that the verse,

“Among them, but not of them.”

would closely enough characterize my situation for years among the busy, bustling ones of the towns; but that would not by any means signify that I hated the curious creatures who were pushing by and jostling me at every step. Nay, nay!

I have been unworldly only; not spiteful. Like Shenstone, when he retired to busy his mind and hands in the decoration of his rural home at Leasowes, I am weary, weary, weary of bustle, and want rest! I am dizzy with this whirl of machinery, this buzz of trade. I am fatigued with this eternal struggle going on around me, in which the main object, if not the sole, of one class is to pile up wealth, and of the other to secure just the needs of the hour, viz: bread, butter and wearing apparel. I do not blame the poor strugglers of the latter kind for desiring the indispensables; but I pity while I censure them that nothing but this is left for them, or, rather, that they will have it so. And it is all very wearisome!

I will confess, however, that, separated from the seething mass of humanity, safely retired into some sheltered, peaceful nook, I could watch the “great drama being enacted upon the theatre of the world” with intense interest, having a comfortable feeling of my own security, and leisure to moralize upon the plots and incidents of the wonderful play. Hazlitt’s captivating picture of what it is “to live to one’s self” has made an impression upon me, and lengthy though it is, I subjoin it:

“What I mean by living to one’s self is living in the world, as in it, but not of it. It is as if no one knew there was such a person, and you wished no one to know it. It is to be a silent spectator of the mighty scene of things, not an object

of attention or curiosity in it; to take a thoughtful, anxious interest in what is passing in the world, but not to feel the slightest inclination to make or meddle with it. It is such a life as a pure spirit might be supposed to lead, and such an interest as it might take in the affairs of men,—calm, contemplative, passive, distant, touched with pity for their sorrows, smiling at their follies without bitterness, sharing their afflictions, but not troubled by their passions, not seeking their notice, nor once dreamt of by them. He who lives wisely to himself and to his own heart looks at the busy world ‘through the loop-holes of retreat’, and does not want to mingle in the fray. ‘He hears the tumult and is still.’ He is not able to mend it and is not willing to mar it. He sees enough in the universe to interest him without putting himself forward to try what he can do to fix the eyes of the universe upon himself. Vain the attempt! He reads the clouds, he looks at the stars, he watches the return of the seasons, the falling leaves of autumn, the perfumed breath of spring, starts with delight at the note of the thrush in the copse near him, sits by the fire, listens to the moaning of the winds, pores upon a book, or discourses the freezing hours away, or melts down hours to minutes in pleasing thought.”\*

Here, indeed, is pictured what Cowper denominates,

“A blest seclusion from a jarring world.”

A fascinating group to me has always been that little brotherhood of gifted men to whom the romantic lake region of England for years afforded a home, and upon whom it has conferred a name that will endure as long as the language. No adjunct is wanting to render the picture of this brilliant family of poets and essayists ever a “phantom of delight”! Genius of the highest order, perfect culture, similarity of tastes and pursuits, mutual appreciation and confidence

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\*HAZLITT'S *Table-Talk*.

upon the part of the men who composed the little band, and kindly neighborhood, are all associated in the mind with the most beautiful and romantic scenery of Old England!\* Happy Lakers! Most beautiful sequestration!

The essayist Montaigne, after a pretty full discussion of the subject of *Retirement* in one of his inimitable productions, remarks:

“There are some complexions more proper for these precepts of retirement than others; such as are of a soft and faint apprehension, and of tender will and affection, as I am, will sooner incline to the advice than active and busy souls.”

I can but consider this as so much in point to the case in hand; for in the mental and physical constitution of the author last quoted I deem I discover much in common with those of the writer of this chapter. He confesses frankly in some of his autobiographical essays, if not always in express words, yet by plain implication, that he was personally of indolent habits, shy, quiet-loving, whimsical, without ambition, etc. In speaking of the object of retirement, he remarks that it is “to live at more leisure and greater ease”; and he draws a picture, horrifying to a man who loves quiet and independence, of the condition of one who lives, moves, and has his being in a crowd:

“He that goes into a crowd must now go one way, then another, keep his elbows close, retire or advance, and quit the direct way, according to what he encounters; and must live, not so much according to his own method, as that of others;

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\*As illustrative of the beautiful neighborliness of the Lake Poets, I append an extract from DEQUINCEY's sketch of the life of WORDSWORTH:

“Coleridge,” says this delightful gossip, “for many years received a copy of the [London] *Courier* as a mark of esteem, and in acknowledgement of his many contributions to it, from one of the proprietors, Mr. Daniel Stewart. This went up in any case, let Coleridge be where he might, to Mrs. Coleridge; for a single day it staid at Keswick, for the use of Southey, and on the next it came on to Wordsworth.”

not according to what he proposes himself, but according to what is proposed to him; according to time; according to men; according to occasion.”\*

Let us pause for a moment here and look over the field to determine, if we can, whether we have made any progress, or otherwise.

With such a make-up as has been depicted, (and after maturer reflection, for which the time consumed in “faggotting together” that part of the chapter lying between the pen-portrait of the author and this point, has afforded me opportunity, I still feel that the “likeness is as like” as I can make it), it will, I think, from that alone be conceded, without argument, *that the town is no place for me!* Thus much, then, has been gained. Now if it could be demonstrated as clearly that such a being would thrive in rural seclusion,—that his mental powers would be developed, his moral health improved, his nerves soothed, his physical part built up there,—why, we should come near to securing a triumphant decision in favor of the country life. Unfortunately, however, notwithstanding the evidence already adduced appears *to tend* that way, the proof that all these *desiderata* would come to pass is, I fear, as yet a long way off. There may remain further comfort and encouragement for us in the experience of others. We shall see.

Thoreau resorted to his hermitage at Walden, as he says, because he had “business to transact”. In another place he intimates that this business was thinking and composing. Pliny also recommends rural retirement to such as desire to do good work with the pen. Balzac, the French novelist, whenever one of his great works was to be produced, buried himself from the world so that none, not even his dearest friends, could find him. The Roman poet, Horace, spent his happiest hours upon his “Sabine Farm,” the gift of his

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\**Essays*, Book 3, Chap. IX.



friend Mæcenas, and when absent therefrom, his heart's yearnings for this rural paradise found utterance in melodious verse:

“ Oh, when again  
Shall I behold the rural plain?  
And when with books and sages deep  
Sequestered ease and gentle sleep,  
In sweet oblivion, blissful balm,  
The busy cares of life becalm? ”\*

The love of the great and variously gifted Varro for his rural home is historical, and eke Cicero's villas and Vatia's retirement; and the Romans used to say “ Vatia lives alone ” when they desired to commend the country life. The intense love of Virgil for the serene seclusion of the country is well known to all who read the best poetry, and hence have perused those exquisite agricultural poems, the *Georgics*, the product of his pen.

In his famous *Anatomy of Melancholy*, old Burton observes:

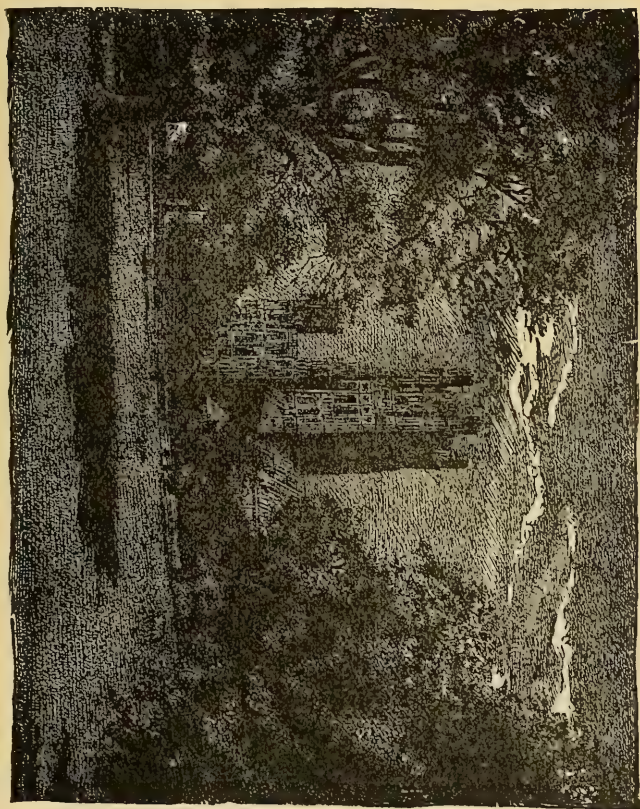
“ The country has his recreations. \* \* The very being in the country—that life itself—is a sufficient recreation to some men, to enjoy such pleasures as those old patriarchs. Diocletian, the emperor, was so much affected with it that he gave over his scepter and turned gardener. \* \* I could say so much of myself: No man ever took more delight in springs, woods, groves, gardens, walks, fish-ponds, rivers.”

Hail, old Namesake! congenial spirit, hail! Bravo, DEMOCRITUS JUNIOR! And after that if one shall be desirous of naming the author of this work DEMOCRITUS THE LEAST, the latter will neither resent the liberty taken, nor question the judgment of the new Adam.

In another part of his work our learned author recurs to this subject, and discourses as follows:

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\*HORACE: VI *Satire*.



"I may not deny that there is some profitable meditation, contemplation and solitariness to be embraced which the fathers so highly commended, Hierom, Chrysostom, Cyprian, Austin in whole tracts; which Petrarch, Erasmus, Stella and others so much magnify in their books; a paradise, a heaven on earth, if it be used aright, good for the body, and better for the soul, as many of those old monks used it, to divine contemplation, \* \* or to the bettering of their knowledge, as Democritus, Cleanthus, and those excellent philosophers have ever done, to sequester themselves from the tumultuous world, as in Pliny's villa, Laurentana, Tully's Tusculum, Jovius' study, that they might better serve God and follow their studies."

So much for my very entertaining, though melancholy old namesake!

The poet Virgil's ardent love for the rural life in his declining years is breathed in every syllable of the following from his second *Georgic*:

"My next desire is, void of care and strife,  
To lead a soft, secure, inglorious life,—  
A country cottage near a crystal flood,  
A winding valley, and a lofty wood."

The bard's sincerity in this wish will not be doubted by one who is familiar with the leading traits of his simple and beautiful character.

The elder D'Israeli in that elegant work, *The Literary Character of Men of Genius*, quotes Lord Bacon as saying that, with him "country fruits" were "good meditations". Thus did that giant mind profit by retirement.

The passionate love of rural life and its scenes and associations, discoverable among the cultivated people of England, has been a subject of frequent remark. No people of the world, perhaps, equal the intelligent classes of that island in their love of nature. This phase of the English

character is finely commented upon by Irving in his *Sketch Book*, an extract from which I give below :

“To this mingling of cultivated and rustic society may be attributed the rural feeling that runs through British literature; the frequent illustrations from rural life, those incomparable descriptions of nature that abound in the British poets, that have continued down from *The Flower and the Leaf* of Chaucer, and have brought into our closets all the freshness and fragrance of the dewy landscape. The pastoral writers of other countries appear as if they had paid Nature an occasional visit, and become acquainted with her general charms; but the British poets have lived and reveled with her—they have wooed her in her most secret haunts—they have watched her minutest caprices. A spray could not tremble in the breeze—a leaf could not rustle to the ground—a diamond drop could not patter in the stream—a fragrance could not exhale from the humble violet, nor a daisy unfold its crimson tints to the morning, but it had been noticed by these impassioned and delicate observers and wrought up into some beautiful morality.”



## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER X.

“All that I say is, I have precedents for it.”

BURTON'S *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

“Oh, that I had the art of easy writing,  
Which should be easy reading! Could I scale  
Parnassus, where the muses sit inditing  
Those pretty poems, never known to fail,  
How quickly would I print, the world delighting,  
A Grecian, Syrian, or Assyrian tale;  
And sell you, mixed with western sentimentalism,  
Some samples of the finest orientalism!”

BYRON: *Beppo*.

“Maid of Dunedin, thou mayst see,  
Though long I sought to pleasure thee,  
That now I've changed my timid tone,  
And sing to please myself alone;  
And thou wilt read, when well I wot  
I care not whether thou dost or not.  
Yes, I'll be querulous or boon,—  
Flow with the tide, change with the moon!

\* \* \*

So may the meteor of the wild,  
Nature's unstaid, erratic child,  
That glimmers o'er the forest fen,  
Or twinkles in the darksome glen,—  
Can that be bound? can that be reined?  
By cold, ungenial rules restrained?  
No!—leave it o'er its ample home,  
The boundless wilderness, to roam,—  
To gleam, to tremble, or to die!  
'Tis Nature's error;—so am I.”

HOGG *Queen Hynde*.



## CHAPTER X.



SOLEMN environ me! It really appears as if I must be quarrelling with one or another of the hyper-critical or captious readers of this discourse for the rest of the way through the "thorny maze" in which I struggle. Here comes one, (or do I imagine it? or did the "phantasm dire" visit me "in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed"?\* and was

it from conscience?), and objects that the amount of "original suggestion" employed in these chapters is unconscionably small. Here is No. 2, who

complains that he has never heard nor read of such a work before. No. 3 criticizes the *quality* of the English used. No. 4 objects to my manner of citing authors as a lawyer cites legal precedents,—as if they were recognized authorities, which settled the question at issue for all time,—and is dubious of the morality of such wholesale stealing. Etc., etc., etc.

(P. S.—Privately, dear reader, and strictly *entre nous*, these are the several objections of as many friends to whom

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\**Job*, Chap. XXXIII; 15.

I have submitted the manuscript of this work for their friendly criticism, and who have given me too much of it. However,

“Better this ordeal  
In friendly hands, before the time of types,  
Than afterward in hands of enemies !”\*)

Well, well, Messieurs, the author would be glad to delight and edify you all, hoped at one time to do so, and now despairs of pleasing a majority even, and can be only a trifle disappointed, this stage having been reached, however much he might lament that it should be so, if he shall not succeed in satisfying any single soul of you.

In reply to objection No. 1, however, I desire first to remind the critic of the *dictum* of the great Dr. Johnson, who is reported on one occasion to have thus delivered himself :

“Modern writers are the moons of literature ; they shine with reflected light,—with light borrowed from the ancients. Greece appears to me to be the fountain of knowledge,—Rome of elegance.”†

And a wiser than Johnson, ever so long before had said : “The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be ; and that which is done, is that which shall be done, and there is no new thing under the sun.”‡ Secondly, and still in reply to the first objection, I wish to urge that there have been books published in these latter days,—aye, and copyrighted,—books, too, that have attained a wide circulation (though, it must be confessed, they have never been extensively quoted) which have exhibited much less of literary ability, less of fancy, less of wit, and contained a much smaller amount of original thought, than this work ! Fact, too !

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\*HOLLAND: *Kathrina*.

†BOSWELL'S *Life of Johnson*. Vol. II.      ‡SOLOMON.

"What were they?" "Name these books!" "We defy you!" Hear the clamor!

Well, then, there was Mark Twain's —

"Which work of that great humorist does not display more—ininitely more—of wit, fancy, literary ability, and originality than this of yours? Tell us! tell us!"

Why, there's his *Scrap Book*; then there was Dr. Todd's *Index Rerum*, and—

"OH, BOSH!"

Well, therefore, withdraw that objection. Now take the second: It appears to the writer when one claims that he never read or heard of such a book, that he is attributing wonderful merit, so far as originality is concerned, to that which he is endeavoring to underrate—a merit, by the way, which another denies that the work possesses—and I thank this late comer! *If he states truth*, I shall henceforth value my work more than I have ever before done. I will quote you, friend, what Sir Thomas Browne says:

"Rather than swell the leaves of learning by fruitless repetition, to sing the same song in all ages, nor adventure at essay beyond the attempt of others, many would be content that some should write like Hel——" What! Dr. Browne impugned! impossible! Please allow me to conclude the quotation which you have interrupted at so awkward a juncture—"write like Helmont and Paracelsus, and be willing to embrace the monstrosity of some opinions, for divers singular notions requiting such observations."

A "high authority" has declared, also, that "Nature abhors equality and similitude as much as foolish men love them."†

In reply to the third objection, viz: against the quality of my diction, I would quote the words of Ctesippus, speaking to Socrates concerning Hippothales, son of Hieronymus, in

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\**Christian Morals*, Part II, § 5. †RUSKIN.

love: "His performances in prose are bad enough, but nothing at all in comparison to his verse."\* And likewise say I unto you, oh, reader of these pages, who, reading, criticise, and, criticising, forgettest moderation! tread softly; you step among mines! observe caution all along! I have given you nothing original but prose as yet, and very little of that: beware lest a worse thing come upon you! *I have been known to do such a thing in my life as produce verse!*

But upon this head I might admit a fault which, from the nature of the case, it was quite difficult to avoid, and for which I confess I do feel like making a suitable apology. I have—I acknowledge it—employed *the same old words* which have been used for the past hundreds of years by all writers of English prose. I know that these words have been used until they are worn thread-bare, have lost the appearance of newness and air of freshness; their gloss is gone; and they have a very plebeian look and vulgar sound.† Regretting, as I do, the necessity which has compelled me to use tools so antiquated, worn, dull and battered; or, to change the figure, to clothe my thoughts in a garb so plain, so cheap, old, faded, shabby,—these habiliments so woeful, (if not, indeed, these "habiliments of woe"), I can only plead that necessity in extenuation of my act, and, as intimated above, humbly solicit the reader's favor.

Now as to my manner of citing authors, I can only say, it is my manner, and quote the old Latin saw, *de gustibus non est disputandum*. As to the charge of stealing, I repel it with considerable virtuous indignation. I own that I have

\*PLATO'S *Republic*, II.

†Since the above sentences were written I have happened, in my reading, upon the following paragraph:

"Things much used inevitably become much worn, and it is one of the most curious phenomena of language that words are as subject as coin to defacement and abrasion, by brisk circulation."—*Introduction to Lectures on the English Language*, by G. P. MARSH.

extracted from other writers freely; but make the claim that my readers have not been wronged thereby, for in the main the matter used has been quite as good as anything I could have produced myself as a substitute. Or, I might confess, in the language of Montaigne, that "I make others say for me, what, either for want of language or want of sense, I cannot myself so well express." I would likewise remind the caviller that Emerson has so great a respect for *my kind of people* that he ranks the first quoter of a good sentence next to the originator thereof.\*

Again, as to having stolen these extracts, *that* were impossible; they were already mine. I had bought them, (in the original packages), and paid for 'em, and could show a clean "abstract of title" to them, every one. Not mine absolutely, to have and to hold to my exclusive benefit and behoof, and that of my heirs, executors, administrators, or assigns, forever; but mine to use,—hence I have used 'em. I couldn't reconcile it to my conscience to do differently. Steal! nay, I'd scorn the thought,—under almost any circumstances; and more particularly in a case like this, holding as I do with Synesius, that "it is a greater offense to steal a dead man's thoughts than his clothes."

It appears now that I, having answered "all and singular" the objections that have been, or could have been, urged or imagined against me as an author, fully and clearly, without equivocation or mental reservation, ought to be allowed to jog along peacefully by your side, dear reader, henceforth, and that amity should characterize our intercourse. What say you? Methinks you may all the more readily assent to this, even if you should happen to discover certain little blemishes scattered here and there through my book, considering a great writer has declared:

"Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,  
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be."†

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\*See Essay, *Quotation and Originality*.

†POPE's *Essay on Criticism*.



After further reflection upon the subject I have concluded to follow my own inclinations anyhow, and those alone, in treating of the many matters which remain for discussion in this work. Call my grammar bad, my rhetoric worse, my logic worst of all,

“Dub me scribbler and denounce my muse,” \*

if you please; I shall, like Mark Antony, “only speak right on” in my own manner, making no claim to be an “orator as Brutus is”, and not aping his style. There was a Burton once who treated of *Melancholy*,† and who had such a humorous turn as oftentimes to cause even the grave and judicious reader to smile: it will be but fair then—a sort of “poetical justice”—if I, writing on lighter themes, and mindful of Montaigne’s apothegm that “the most certain sign of wisdom is continual cheerfulness”,‡ striving, too, to stir men’s hearts and minds to gladness and mirth, compose in such a way as to make “severe and sour-complectioned”§ readers sad, yea, to cause ’em even to groan with anguish.

“I who have written much in prose and verse  
For others’ uses, will write now for mine,—  
Will write my story for my better self.”||

But in all I have said, remember, I don’t wish to be understood as assuming the attitude of one consciously sinning and madly defying the world to “help itself”. Mind, I don’t acknowledge the sin! I am doing the very best I can. Wherein I fail totally, or come short by certain degrees, I am helpless. If I knew how to be infinitely more discreet, witty, or wise, why, doubtless, notwithstanding my great stubbornness and admitted egotism, I should fall to forthwith, and show that I had profited by such knowledge:

“I am as I am, and so will I be!”

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\*BYRON: *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.

†BURTON’S *Anatomy of Melancholy*. ‡*Essays*, Book 1, Chap. LX.

§IZAAB WALTON. ||MRS. BROWNING.

And yet—and yet—and after all, I will not be so rash as to exclaim with Tickler of the *Noctes* that, “I care not a single curse for all the criticism that was ever canted, decanted, or recanted!”—for I do care,—I do, indeed, gentle reader! Therefore if you discover aught amiss in me, *please don't mention it to your neighbor*. “But something too much of this.” Read the next chapter.



## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XI.

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"Doubtless I am pushed and shoved by  
Rogues and fools enough: the more  
Good luck mine;—I love, am loved by  
Some few honest to the core."

ROBERT BROWNING.

"When his task requires the wiping out from memory of 'all trivial fond records that youth and observation copied there', he must leave the house, the street, and the club, and go to wooded uplands, to the clearing, and the brook. Well for him if he can say with the old minstrel, 'I know where to find a new song!'"

EMERSON: *Resources for the Country.*



## CHAPTER XI.

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ERVENTLY do I thank God every day, or at least as often as the thought occurs to me, that I, too, am loved by some few "honest to the core" and that I have some of that character to love. One of these is my brother Horace. Thank the good Lord for giving me such a brother as Horace! This brother is one of the few persons in the world who have appeared to thoroughly understand and appreciate the writer;—so to value, so to love him, that they have been ready at all times to excuse his mistakes, overlook his short-

comings, cover with the broad mantle of charity his many misdeeds, stand by him, uphold him through evil and good report and to make the cause of a brother their own. Thank God again I say with deepest sincerity, for brother Horace!

Then Horace, besides being indulgent to my faults and helpful of my necessities at all times, has also been ever ready to enjoy my little jokes and laugh at my witticisms. Being possessed of a kindred genius, he was placed more on a plain with the writer than most, and nothing said or done by me has ever seemed to be ill-timed or misplaced

to Horace. All these things have contributed to put me vastly at ease with my great-hearted brother; hence, whenever I have had an epigram or so to "fire off", or have produced a poetical effusion of the more atrocious sort which I have desired to read to some one in order to test its effect upon live flesh and blood, I have always been certain of a (patient subject, shall I say? nay!) kind and appreciative auditor in Horace.\* The latter has invariably been the recipient of my most humorous epistolary productions, also, and if so be that he has preserved them, and providing always that he survives me, will be able one of these days to furnish an enterprising editor some entertaining morsels in this kind wherewithal to eke out for me a volume of literary remains.

I might, perhaps, let the reader into a little secret here: Horace, too, once, like his great Roman namesake, and like Lycidas,

"Knew himself to sing  
And build the lofty rhyme."†

Yes, reader, quiet, staid, peaceable, worthy citizen as he seems now, domestic in his tastes and humane in disposition — that same Horace in his younger days composed verses! — and such verses! But though, haply, some of his poetical feet were so defective that the lines hobbled and halted, and even "went on three legs", and spavined legs at that, yet, as the all-expressive modern phrase is, "they got there," managing to jingle with rhyme on their way, and, as Horace himself was wont to say, half apologetically, of them, "were a great deal better than no poetry"; though, doubtless, of this there might have been some question.

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\*SOUTHEY has experienced something of this feeling of complaisance toward an admiring relative. He once wrote:

"My wife's nephew is a sensible lad. He reads my writings, likes my stories, admires my singing, and thinks as I do in politics: a youth of parts and considerable promise.—*The Doctor*, &c., A. 1, Chap. VII.

†MILTON: *Lycidas*.



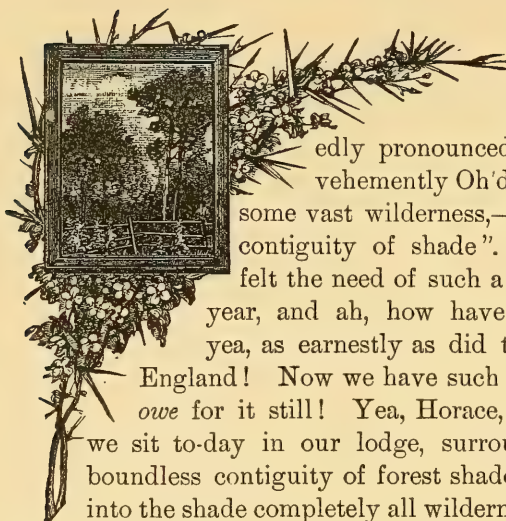
What I have written is written: the chief use of the present chapter, according to the original plan of the writer, was to furnish the reader with a copy of a letter addressed by his brother to Horace only a few months after the General's occupation of the new house at Oakfields. The farm had been born from Chaos and had received a name. Indeed, it had been christened long before it could be said to have had a birth as a farm at all. Some clearing had been done; a house had been reared, and, as shown above, occupied, not by the owner, but by hirelings; a barn had been built; there were horses, cattle, sheep, hogs, and all kinds of poultry in the farm-yard and pastures; crops of grass, grain and roots were growing, and the heart of the master swelled with love and pride,—in short his joy in his new possessions, unlike the estate itself, knew no bounds! Of course Horace had been kept posted with regard to the matters taking place at the new farm, in everything there was he deeply interested, and it was to him, and to him alone, that the enthusiastic owner of Oakfields could safely give unreserved expression of his happiness.

The letter was chiefly written in the main room of the small farm-house, one bright July afternoon. How well I remember the day! I sat at a plain pine desk of black stain, which stood near the eastern window, whence I could see the men at work at land-clearing, and where the mingled sounds of the farm-yard—my farm-yard—were as music to my ear! My epistle ran as follows:

OAKFIELDS, July 17, 18—

*To Horace, a Sojourner in the Deserts of the North—Greeting:*

“I lang hae thought, my youthfu’ friend,  
 A something to hae sent you,  
 Though it should serve na other end  
 Than just a kind memento;  
 Though how the subject theme may gang  
 Let time and chance determine,—  
 Mayhap it may turn out a sang,  
 Mayhap turn out a sermon!”



Dear Horace, it was Cowper (whose name some have affect-  
edly pronounced Cooper) who so  
vehemently Oh'd "for a lodge in  
some vast wilderness,—some boundless  
contiguity of shade". Well, we have  
felt the need of such a lodge for many a  
year, and ah, how have we oh'd for it!  
yea, as earnestly as did the sweet poet of  
England! Now we have such a lodge, and—we  
*owe* for it still! Yea, Horace, and of a verity,  
we sit to-day in our lodge, surrounded by such a  
boundless contiguity of forest shadow as must throw  
into the shade completely all wildernesses Mr. Cowper  
could have imagined as surroundings for his camping-place  
in his own little island. Whether we are so secure in our  
new and delightful retreat as that

"Rumor of oppression and deceit,  
Of unsuccessful, or successful war,"

will "never reach us more," remains to be seen; but if such  
rumors do reach us we shall not mind them much anyhow,  
and to ensure immunity from cares of this kind we propose  
to drop the newspapers.

"Am not I an ancient mariner," quoth the old Dominie,  
caught, drunk, sailing down the Thames in a lighter, as the  
amusing incident is narrated in that entertaining novel by  
Captain Marryatt, *Jacob Faithful*. Are not we happy hus-  
bandmen, destined soon to "sit under our own vine and fig-  
tree", as it were? Have not the plantain and the knot-  
grass already begun to grow about the doorway of our  
farm-house? Have we not beaten the printing-press into  
plowshares, and the shooting-stick into pruning-hooks,  
figuratively speaking? And we love the art preservative  
no more. And shall we not convert compositor into com-

post to fertilize, and the "devil" into swine to stock our farm withal, if we keep on? "Oh, Gimini! but we are in high spirits!" exclaims Christopher North in his *Recreations*, when speaking of the joys of the pedestrian. Yea, Christopher, are we in high spirits here; and, verily, "there are delights which none but" *husbandmen* know. But, perhaps, with us as in the case of the pedestrian (as our author adds for a saving clause further down the page) "much—all depends upon the character of the" husbandman!

Horace, dear, you ought to be with us:

Here we have butter pure as virgin gold;  
And milk from cows that can a tail unfold  
With bovine pride; and new laid eggs whose praise  
Is sung by pullets with their morning lays;  
Trout (in a horn), good water from the well,  
And other blessings more than tongue can tell!"

Yea, doth this land already flow with milk, and the honey shall be forthcoming.

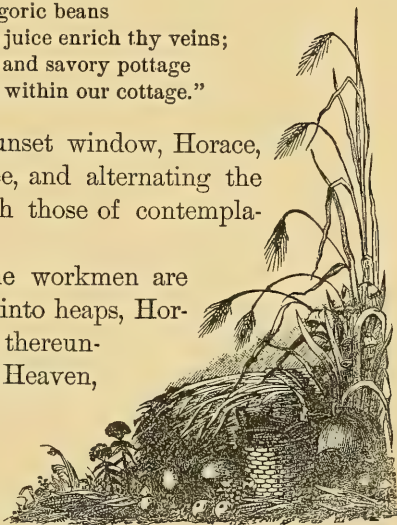
If thou wilt visit us here, thou shalt be treated according to the verse of thy Roman namesake:

"Here shall Pythagoric beans  
With wholesome juice enrich thy veins;  
And bacon, ham and savory pottage  
Be served to you within our cottage."

We are sitting by the sunset window, Horace, penning this epistle to thee, and alternating the delights of composition with those of contemplation.

Abroad in the field the workmen are piling the logs and brush into heaps, Horace, and applying the torch thereunto. The flames leap toward Heaven,

"Higher, higher, higher,  
With a desperate desire,"  
And a resolute endeavor,  
Now, now to sit or never  
By th' side of the pale moon!"



How beautiful a picture! and a type, Horace, of the ambitious spirit of man!

Rood by rood, Horace, we see our fields widening, and so much new space added to the productive area of the world—so much increment to the solid wealth of the nation!

“Picture it, think of it, dissolute man!”

(Don’t take this last expression to heart, Horace; we meant nothing personal, but could not afford to lose the quotation.)

Oh, ’tis pleasant to earn one’s bread thus, Horace, by the sweat of—“thy *hired man’s brow!*”—Well, never mind that part. Somehow our imported sentiment don’t *pay in* as well as usual to-day.

But who cares? One of the village neighbors dubs this our “toy-farm”. A pretty expensive toy it is likely to prove! But who cares for *that*, again? We must have our little amusements—our *recreations*, eh? and to parody Burns:

“Some farm, (vain thought!) for needfu’ cash;  
Some farm, (as vain!) t’ improve their *hash*;  
Some to avoid the city’s crash,  
Or dodge a dun!  
For us,—an aim we never fash,—  
*We farm for fun!*”

The supper horn has blown, and the boys from the “logging fallow” come trooping, bearing striking resemblance to a

“Blackening train o’ craws to their repose.”

To the complexion are they come of Ethiops, and when they shall have washed, and like the old Baron’s retainers,

“Thronged around the board”,

you shall see, in your mind’s eye, Horace, oh! Horace, (a bad one *that!*) a work of destruction commence and continue that shall cause your “sensitive soul” to reflect on death’s doings.

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The long bright day is over, Horace, and forms a portion of the unrecallable past!

“Well have they done their office, those bright hours,  
The latest of whose train goes softly out  
In the red west!”\*

With yet unfinished letter we linger in the twilight by the pleasant east window and gaze out, and gaze deep into the cavernous openings in the old woods, lighted up by the flames in the fields. A weird sight it is!

Ah, Horace, how the poetry gushes into the soul of the imaginative youth (like the undersigned) as he contemplates the works of nature which surround a home like this! Environing our cot on every hand, stand the far-stretching forests. It is the witching hour of even; and oh, at such an hour, Horace,

“In this new strange world,  
How mysterious, how eternal seems  
The mighty melancholy of the woods!”†

Yea, Horace, these —

“These are the forests primeval, the murmuring pines and the hemlocks,  
Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,  
Stand like druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic,  
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms.”‡

Horace, dost thou not envy us, that we are so agreeably circumstanced here, and *have the heart to so enjoy it?* Well sang the sweet poet:

“I shall ever bless my destiny,  
That in a time when under pleasant trees  
Pan is no longer sought, I feel a free  
A leafy luxury!”§

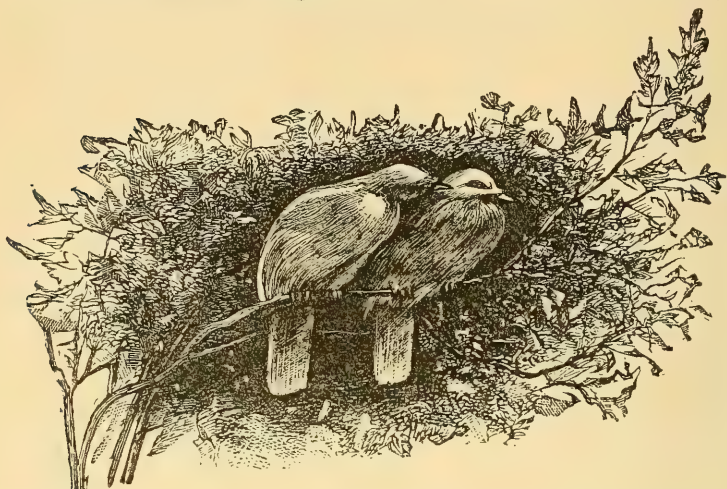
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\*BRYANT. †MRS. HEMANS.

‡LONGFELLOW: *Evangeline*. §KEATS.



Ah, how in contrast with the petty strifes and struggles of that other phase of life we know would be a continuous existence here in the umbrageous shadow of these "druid oaks",



branching elms—the bird-cathedrals of which Nature was the architect—these hemlocks, and

“Pine-groves with their soft and soul-like sounds,”\*

and sweet balsamic odors! Perfect peace reigns hereabout, and ever will!

“How sacred and how innocent  
A country life appears!  
How free from tumult, discontent,  
From flattery, or fears!

‘This was the first and happiest life  
When man enjoyed himself,  
Till pride exchange’d blest peace for strife,  
And happiness for pelf!

“’Twas here the poets were inspired—  
Here taught the multitude;  
The brave they here with honor fired,  
And civilized the rude!”†

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\*COLERIDGE.

†CATHARINE PHILLIPS.

How sensible wert thou, Horace, to again seek rural retirement! In the language of Hosea Biglow:

“What man with man would push and altercation,  
Piecing out crooked means for crooked ends,  
When he can have the skies and woods for friends,  
Snatch back the rudder of his dismantled fate,  
And in himself be ruler, church and state?”

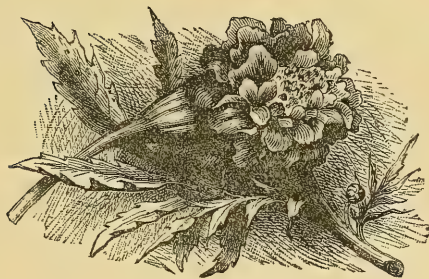
Oh, that I had the lyre of a Thompson, or a Street to give expression to my full heart to-night, Horace!

“What,” you cry, “you a newspaper man of some seven or eight years standing, and now need the aid of another lyre! Impossible!”

Well if you are going to grow impudent at that rate, Horace, I drop you forthwith! Good-bye.

Subscribed and sworn to the day and year first above written.

HEZ.



## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XII.



"You twa hae exhoused the subject. I never heard ony question mair ably argued on baith sides,—wi' mair caution, and, at the same time, wi' mair sagawcity; and the consequence is, that, while you're baith in the richt, and hae acquitted yoursel's till admiration, you hae baith left it preceesely where it was afore either of you opened his mouth."

*Shepherd, in Noctes Ambrosiana, LI*

"Ye generous Britons, venerate the plough!"

THOMPSON: *Seasons.*

"Tom he went a ploughin', and couldn't a ploughed it worse ;

He sat down on the handles, and went to spinnin' verse;

He wrote it nice and pretty,

An agricultural ditty,

But all his pesky measures didn't measure an acre more,

Nor his p'int's didn't turn a furrow that wasn't turned before."

WILL CARLETON.



## CHAPTER XII.

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Y good cousin, the 'Squire, happened to call again at the cottage while father's visit still continued. The everlasting topic came up again, of course, for discussion. This appeared to be in accordance with the wishes of both my guests, and no one can truthfully say that I was ever averse to a resumption thereof. The 'Squire had about "made up his mind" to quit the ranks of practical farmers himself, and I began

now for the first time to suspect that it was for this reason—which had probably existed for a period longer than any except himself knew—that I had found in him so inveterate an opponent of my own scheme. To be just to him, his conduct and conversation had been very consistent in this regard. He had always considered farming a slow business, and had usually been on the alert to discover an opening elsewhere which would enable him to escape from the calling of his fathers. I found him still the steady adversary, ready to

meet my arguments *pro* with his *contra*, whether of arguments, ridicule, or (what was really a portion of the latter and worst of all) that terrible, discomfiting laugh.

I had had some discussions with my cousin relating to this idiosyncrasy of his, years before. He then owned the farm which later he occupied, and, as he was at that time wont to express it, seemed fated to gain a livelihood by tilling it. It was a destiny that his mind rebelled against even then; but afterward he appeared to have settled down with his young wife in his snug rural home, in a state that confessedly a good deal resembled old-fashioned domestic bliss. He ought to have been happy if ever man was. With a bright, affectionate helpmate, and, by and by, two lovely children, upon his own fine and unincumbered domain, personal debts few or none, everything actually needed in the way of house and farm furniture and stock, at hand—why should he not have been one of the happiest of mortals? But that old serpent—discontent—seems somehow to have been a pretty constant visitant in this Eden, and that he was finally successful in driving its rightful inhabitants thence will appear from a letter—given in a later chapter of this work—written by me to the 'Squire after the happening of that, to me, mournful event.

My cousin was ambitious; he desired to make money rapidly. Then, too, he longed for a livelier scene than that he found in the country, and for other associations. He felt that he possessed talents (hitherto folded in a napkin!) which would enable him to "flourish like a tree planted by the rivers of water"\* could he once get himself planted in congenial soil.

But a peculiarity in the position which my father here assumed is worthy of mention. He looked very grave whenever he heard any intimation from my cousin that the latter was about to desert his green nest in the country; while, at

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\*PSALMS, I, 3.



the same time, he contended that the farm was no place for *me*. The old 'Squire was by no means without sagacity. He felt in his inmost heart that for the particular variety of farm-work for which he had at one time pronounced me eminently qualified, viz: "holding down the top rail of the fence," he, too, was peculiarly fitted both by nature and inclination! and he applied to the question the old saw: "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," herein giving evidence of the possession of a logical mind.

Probably my kinsman was "sound on the goose question," so far as his deductions of the character described were concerned; and, really, I am still of the opinion that those matters which took place during our youthful companionship, from which experience it was my good cousin drew his inference against *my* fitness for the farmer's lot, would, if the whole truth were known, tell rather more emphatically against his own; but I do not desire to press this point;—it is not only a delicate question, but one, at this distance, very hard of solution.

This was the everlasting burden of my kinsman's song: You think you will like it, but you will not. You've got to work hard to make it pay at all,—and then it won't! It is pretty enough picturing out green fields and whispering woods, grapevines and fig leaves; but there are other things upon the farm. There are such things as hot suns, and sweat, and fatigue, and dust, and mud, and long hours, and early risings, and failure of crops, losses, and crosses, and disappointments! You can't sit around in the shade of a tree or a roof, as you do in the newspaper business. You'll have to work till your back aches, and your eyes are full of grime, while your head throbs so that you would not be able to tell the difference between Thompson's *Seasons*, and the sublime verses in Thomson's arithmetic which recite,

"Thirty days hath September," etc.

Nay, the latter would be more in tune with your mood—and tense!—for the very question most agitating your mind

might be the "getting in" of your winter wheat in season. Then there's the long winter—almost a dead loss to the farmer—yea, *worse* than a dead loss, in fact, for, according to the old song,

"The winter consumes all the summer doth yield."

Then if you add to all these a natural distaste on the part of the farmer, for all the farmer's work, why, you will see the life can neither be a profitable nor a pleasant one.

This case of the 'Squire's might appear like a strong one to a person at a distance, who had always been at a distance, from the profession sought to be characterized in the above random sentences; but you and I, dear reader, well know that this tirade is, for the most part, arrant nonsense, and that it would be easy in like manner to vilify any business or profession. I simply inquire here if there be any sort of work by which mortal man wins his daily bread that has not its unpleasant features—its arduous duties? I know of none. You remember the reply of the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher to the young gentleman who wrote desiring to have kindly pointed out to himself a life-work that would be at once respectable, remunerative and easy. Said Mr. Beecher to him, substantially: "Don't try the law. Keep out of journalism. Avoid mercantile pursuits. Don't take up the practice of medicine. Don't become a farmer. Beware of the ministry. Don't learn any of the mechanical trades."

And the conclusion of the great preacher's epistle was as follows:

"Ah, my honest young friend, this is a hard old world we have got into! There is but one easy place in it, and that's the grave!"\*

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\*The author read the letter referred to, and the reply, in the *New York Ledger*, I think, a good many years ago. In a certain Ohio town, a few weeks since, a middle aged man was pointed out to me as the identical person who addressed the letter to Mr. Beecher. The case it seemed was notorious in the town in which the young man dwelt at the time he wrote and received the reply, as above noted.

For the other part, I believe that a person can develop a liking, or a disrelish, according to the direction in which he exerts himself, for any honorable business whatever, that is fairly remunerative and which, at the same time, is calculated to afford a reasonable opportunity for the development of the intellectual faculties.

But it will be clear, from the above, that my good cousin and myself were, if anything different, further apart in our views of this all-important matter, than ever. Tiring at length of the hopeless argument, my father recalled my promise made on the occasion of the 'Squire's previous visit that I would read an original poem connected with the subject that had engrossed our attention then, as well as at this time, and requested a fulfillment thereof. My cousin "seconded the motion", and, it being carried *nem. con.*, I produced a roll of manuscript and read to very well-behaved and attentive listeners, the following lengthy effusion, which I had entitled:

THE POETICAL FARMER AND HIS PRACTICAL FOREMAN;  
OR HOW I HELD THE PLOW.

To-day I mean to spend my leisure  
Where rural features charm,  
And find, like Roman Horace, pleasure  
Upon *my* "Sabine Farm;"

Or, like our own white-coated Roman,—  
The noblest of 'em all!—  
Who bore like name, and whose farm no man  
Him grudged, and which they call

Chappaqua; this time, too, 'tis *business*,—  
And plowing I will go;  
'Tis good, 'tis said, for spleen and dizziness,  
By those who ought to know!

Too long have I such toil neglected,  
 And felt dyspepsia's curse;  
 Likewise my sloth may have affected  
 Injuriously my purse!

Yea, "he that by the plow would thrive,"  
 (You know the ancient drivell!)  
 "Himself must either hold or drive!"  
 But Richard's head was level!

I've quite made up my mind at length  
 To take th' implied advice;  
 'Twill give my limbs prodigious strength,—  
 And plowing, too, is "nice!"

At least that's what Delphine allowed,  
 The other day in town,  
 And promised some day when I plowed  
 She'd certainly "come down."

And Thoreau somewhere takes the stand  
 That 'tis a noble toil,—  
 "Grave oxen for companions," and  
 "Material the soil!"

Delphine, you know, an heiress is,—  
 A merchant prince's daughter,—  
 Late all the way from Paris is:  
 What she *don't* know she'd *oughter*!

She's read the classics through and through,—  
 (Our tastes do near relate us!)  
 She says my rustic habits do  
 Recall great Cincinnatus!

Oft lavishly to me she's praised  
 Lucullus, Virgil, Cato;—  
*They* plowed, she says, and much cane raised,  
 And many a sweet potato!

And Pliny writes, and Cicero,  
 And other Roman sages,  
 Extolling "following the plow,"  
 Full many a hundred pages!

Good old Greek Hesiod is another:  
 In *Works and Days* he's showing  
 Unto his idle, thriftless brother  
 What worthy work is plowing!

There's General Xenophon, who thought  
 This best of *any basis*  
 To build for health and wealth on!—caught,  
 At *eighty*, plowing races!

Xen. was a Greek; but still had wit;  
 Then there was Columella,  
 Glozed plowing up in Latin, yet  
 Was quite a "likely fellah"!\*

These writers, true, were heathens all;  
 But when it comes to "culture,"  
 They drive us moderns to the wall,—  
 The eagle to the vulture!

The simile is not first class, —  
 I mean, however, that  
 These Greek and Roman boys must pass  
 For knowing "what is what!"

\*A New Englandism.



But husbandmen had anciently  
 To help 'em, gods and goddesses,—  
 A multitude!\* Old *Hesiod* see,  
 And th' *Iliads* and *Odysseys*.

Grave sacrifices then were made  
 By rustics to their deities;  
 And every pond and every glade  
 At least had two or three o' these!

Exact in all these pious rites  
 Was farmer-bard *Tibullus*,†  
 Who plowed all day and rhymed o' nights,—  
 Or else the hist'ries "gull" us!

But why now quote the Roman, Greek,  
 Or Macedonian sages,  
 While our art's praise so nobly speak  
 The Emersonian pages?

Is't not enough that Washington  
 And Jefferson commend it?  
 And Horace Greeley thought it fun;—‡  
*That* surely ought to end it!

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\*As early as *HESIOD*'s days there were 30,000 deities. *Works and Days*, lib. I, v. 250. But the tasks to be performed by these seem still too great for their number. The provinces of the deities were so subdivided, that there was even a god of Sneezing. *ARIST. Probl.*, § 33, cap. 7. See also *HUME's Essay on Natural History of Religion*, § 2.

†His biographers inform us also of the *priapus*, or scarecrow, set up in his fields by this gentle poet-farmer.

‡Following is the dedication of *GREELEY's What I Know of Farming*:  
 "To the man of our age who shall make the first plow propelled by steam, or other mechanical power, whereby not less than ten acres per day shall be thoroughly pulverized to a depth of two feet, at a cost of not more than two dollars per acre, this work is admiringly dedicated by the Author."

The doubt, I mean, and all discussion,—  
 Not end all plowing, surely!  
 So whether now or not I push on  
 Depends on liking purely.

Then, General, harness up the cattle,—  
 The huge, the broad-horned, awkward,  
 Strong brutes! I mean to try their mettle;  
 Don't yoke 'em front-side backward,

Nor upside down; no tricks now please,—  
 Downright and perpendicular!  
 Fetch chain, and bolt, and clevises:  
 I *may* appear particular,

Just at the start, and somewhat nervous,  
 Don't let it prove contagious.  
 Shake hands, old Plow! an you will serve us  
 We'll soon move like old stagers!

For grand display there's now a passion  
 In Yankee, or Canadian,  
 Who farms; reverse with me's the fashion:  
 Simplicity Arcadian!

The favorite team before the plow,  
 American or Európean,\*  
 Is always steam or horses now;  
 But th' ox-team's more Utopian.†

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\*European — "This word, according to the analogy of our own language ought certainly to have the accent on the second syllable; and this is the pronounciation which unlettered speakers constantly adopt; but the learned, ashamed of the analogies of their own tongue, always place the accent on the third syllable, because *Europeus* has the penultimate long, and is therefore accented in Latin." — WALKER.

†But few horses were reared in Utopia, and those only for exercising the youth in the act of equestrianism. "For they do not put them to any work either of plowing or carriage, for which they employ oxen: because though their horses are stronger, yet they find oxen can hold out longer." — *Utop.*, Chap. I.

Now, General, manage *I* this tillage;  
 You I'll not need at all the day;  
 Hitch up the gray, drive to the village,  
 And spend a jovial holiday.

You've labored hard through many a week,  
 And *need* the recreation;  
 Tell all my friends with whom you speak  
 I'm plowing! Shun temptation!

Ho! General, ho! one moment wait:—  
 How call you these huge cattle?  
 "The nigh one Bill; the off ox Bright."  
 That's all. Now for the battle!

I'll here proceed to draw a furrow,  
 The beauty and precision  
 Of which would charm the heart of Thoreau,  
 Or th' emp'ror Diocletian!

Back, Bright! haw, Bill! haw, haw, Bill! Whoa!  
 Why, William! you've forgotten  
 Which way *haw* is; or *I* have. Ho!  
 (Confound a memory rotten!)

Ho! General, ho! good General! say,  
 Which way is haw,—toward Bright there?  
 "Nay, that is *gee*; 'tis t'other way."  
 The *left*? Then Bill was *right* there,

And *I* was *left* (that's slang). Now, giants,  
 Let's start 'er going: ea-sy!  
 We'll soon bid obstacles defiance,  
 And slide along so — greasy!

Now Bright, boy, keep the furrow true!  
Sir William! step up *nervy*!  
The whole of this green turf must you  
To-day turn topsy-turvy!

How smooth she glides! How fine it turns!  
Prince, proud as Esterhazy!  
Thus gallantly moved Bobbie Burns  
That day he crushed the daisy!\*



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\*“ I thought  
Of him who walked in glory and in joy,  
Following his plow along the mountain side.

WORDSWORTH.

I'm glad I'll meet no daisies here;  
 'Twould wound my sensibilities  
 To treat the flower to poets dear  
 With wretched incivilities!

Come, William, faster move those shoes;  
 And likewise, you, your Brightness;  
 (I find it not amiss to use  
 At all times great politeness!)

Ah, how such manly exercise  
 My every fiber thrills!  
 Ye smiling fields, with me rejoice!  
 And leap ye little hills!

Yon blue-bird sings a psalm of joy;  
 I scent the fragrant mould;  
 Soul-filling bliss like this, my boy,  
 Is better than fine gold!

Aye, this sweet rural life for me!  
 Haw Bright! that's right,—a trump!  
 Now gee, Bill, gee! why, can't you see?  
*Gee, BILL! we'll strike that stump!*

*Crash!* Whoa! Oh, halt! for Heaven's sake!  
 What fearful fate has met us?  
 My ribs! my limbs! the plow a-wreck!  
 My eyes! Great Cincinnatus!

Ho! General, come and lend your aid;  
 I'm glad you kindly tarried;  
 What was it that explosion made  
 Which us to ruin hurried?



Can anything that's whole be found?

Aught saved of any value?

'T was a torpedo underground,

Or lightning stroke, I tell you!

What, laughing! "Nothing cracked!" Dred Scott!

Dread Jupiter and Juno!

That shows how little sense you've got!

*I'm* ruined at least, as *you* know!

But—I *can* stand!—yea, move!—and *go*!

But friend how near the sky was,

When I went up, you'll never know

Till you've been hurled as I was.

Nay, furthermore, how hard the ground

When I, at length returning,

Struck earth! I heard a booming sound,

And all the stars were burning!

What was it, then, the plowshare caught?

"It plainly lies revealed here;"

A pine snag! Well, I never thought

Such danger was concealed here!

Dear General, if you do not care

About the holiday,

I'll let you plow a little here,

And I will drive the gray!

When I had concluded, I looked up.

"Pretty good," commented my father, quite coolly.

"Umph!" growled he of the bald-head, scowling.

"Who's Delphine?" queried Malvina with some show of interest.

"Do you know what that reminds me of?" demanded the ancient J. P.

During the pause which followed this last, I found time to answer one question and ask another, as follows:

"No; what?"

"Why," resumed "his honor," "you remember the old story, don't you, about a member of the Connecticut legislature (I guess it was Connecticut), who, when some bill was up for consideration before the *Haouse*, made a long, rambling speech, chock full of quotations from the classics, and coming but little nearer home, or the matter in hand. After he had concluded, a little gentleman on the other side sprang up and said: 'Mr. Speaker, the honorable member has doubtless made a fine speech. I followed him while he roamed with Romulus, soaked with Socrates, ripped with Euripides, and canted with old Cantharides. But what, may I ask, has all this to do with the laws of Connecticut?'"

The 'Squire paused out of breath, and leered about him like one who is fully persuaded in his own mind that he has made a "hit." "Well," I said, "what is the application?"

"Why," spoke my cousin, "I should like to know what bearing those verses have, with all that array of heathenish names, upon the question at issue!"

"So should I," cried my father.

"And I," I added.

"What's that Shakespeare has to say about the poet's eye rolling in a frenzy," the 'Squire asked, after a little pause.

"Why," I answered, "he says:

'The poet (that's I) in a fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from earth to heaven, and back again,'

or something like that."

"Who's Delphine?" asked Malvina, in tone and manner kindly but firm.





**NOTE.**—In a former chapter (viz. VII.) I inadvertently uttered a word which, as I reflect on the subject, I deem might be construed by the reader as a half promise, at least, that I would afford him an opportunity to judge of my celebrated owl-portraits. Obligations of this sort left unfulfilled weigh upon my conscience. These considerations, and no foolish vanity on account of any skill in limning which I may, or may suppose myself to possess, are the occasion of all that you see upon this page.

The above is an owl; and a pretty good owl, too,—considering. The owl is quite as difficult a bird to draw, as to draw out. The fine points of his body do not always show well in a picture, any more than the fine points of his character in a “mixed company” composed of his feathered neighbors of the forest. In this case the artist has doubtless made the very most of the best matters, viz: the eyes and ears,—nay, if in anything we differ, I think I may fairly claim that in the representation of these organs in this instance art has improved upon nature itself.

## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XIII.

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"He rode a horse that would have flown,  
But that his heavy rider held him down "

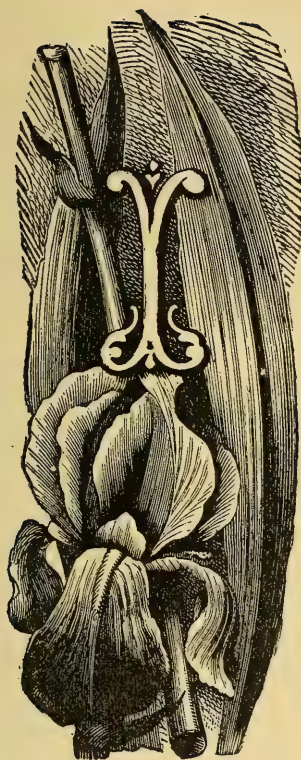
TENNYSON.

"'Our armies swore terribly in Flanders', cried my  
Uncle Toby, 'but nothing to this.'"

*Tristram Shandy*, Vol. III, Chap. XI.

"A good mouth-filling oath!"

SHAKESPEARE: *Henry IV.*



## CHAPTER XIII.

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IN the curious chapter upon which we are now entering, I shall venture to relate in my own way some little anecdotes, to note divers trifling incidents connected with the farm, and to comment thereon.

In my own way, I say, and repeat. In all my career in this field hitherto, have I too carefully observed the temper of my reader's mind, and too sedulously trimmed my mood and timed the paces of my Pegasus to suit that temper. I deem it no more than just that I should have one chapter of my own, — one in which I may allow the "winged steed" I bestride to curvet about in his wildest and most

natural manner, wherein, to my mind, he not only displays himself to the best advantage, but, at the same time, most enjoys himself, while he affords me the liveliest and most agreeable exercise. But lest I be misapprehended at the outset, I hasten to say that at his wildest gait the steed aforementioned is not a "fast" nag,—no 2:10 affair, that sweeps the stakes at the sessions of the national, or international, horse association; but a plain, honest-trotting, farmer's pony, with a flash of fire in his kindly-humorous "off-eye," with shaggy unkempt mane and tail, clean limbs and powerful "wind"



apparatus, and, withal, prompt and true. As to his "style", I should say it is rather modest than majestic, or showy. The wings, of which some intimation has above been given, in my "Peggy" occupy the position upon the body of the beast usually assigned to the ears. This serves to give the amiable animal, from certain points of view, some slight resemblance to a hybrid quadruped not to be named in the same paragraph, and has led to sundry and divers aspersions upon his master. Stupid my steed is not, nor stubborn; nor, unless mightily provoked, is he in the least inclined to kick! When pricked to desperation, however, he rests on his forehead, and with flaming eyes, smoking nostrils, and mane and tail like two black clouds streaming on the wind, strikes out with all his four strong limbs vehemently and in every direction, and woe to the unlucky wight who ventures within range of his terrible hoofs!

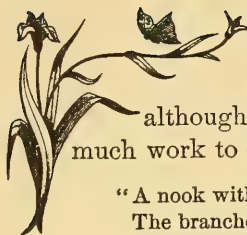
All of the above is figurative, and contains precisely the amount of meaning you may choose to impute to it. It is just as significant and sensible as is some two-thirds or three-fourths of the romantic poetry of ancient Greece or Rome, or of that class of English verse represented by the *Fairy Queen*, and differs not in kind from such compositions as Goethe's *Faust* and Bailey's *Festus*. It is all right; 'tis fine writing—fine figurative writing! Plain people (like you and me, reader,) may not understand it; but the poets will, and—we must endeavor to *look* as though we did.

I remember, and shall never forget, that bright day in October, when, in company with my friend and hireling, Charles, the surveyor, I first inspected that tract of land which forms the major portion of what is now Oakfield's Farm. We began by finding (no easy task) the "corner" upon the township line where met and meets the southern boundary lines of sections numbered thirty-three and thirty-four, of township number fifteen north, of range number two east. Thence we proceeded to trace the township line west-

ward one-half mile, to a stake that Charley called a "quarter post," which we were greatly gratified to find in a good state of preservation. This was the corner of the territory, viz: the west half of section thirty-three, which we had come to survey. The "quarter line" leading toward the north was followed some distance, and retraced to the quarter post; we then followed the township line westward some eighty perches, over a sandy ridge, and through the tangled brushwood of the bottom land, when we left the line and plunged boldly (that's a good expression, and an authorized: I felt serene, and Charles looked like a chubby lion!) into the trackless forest, and pursued our way to the northward. We had traversed a region where the soil was sandy, the surface now a ridge, and now a dry swale with a growth of coarse grass and flags, whereon the remaining timber (the greater portion had been taken off by the lumbermen) was pine, hemlock, poplar white-birch, etc., and mostly dead — killed by the great fire of 1871 — a distance of some one hundred and forty perches, when we ascended a ridge higher than any previous one, crossed it, dived down its steep northern side (here it was of the character of a bank) and found ourselves upon beautiful flats covered, for the most part, with a growth of fine deciduous trees. A few yards further and we came to a spot where two ancient lumber-roads crossed, and where there was an open space. The ground in this opening was covered with a dense growth of grass upon which some rays of the bright sun were now falling. Taken with its surroundings of graceful overhanging elms and maples, and in contrast with the dreary region just crossed, this impressed itself upon me as the most beautiful and delightful spot I had ever beheld:

"A sweeter sod  
Than fancy's feet had ever trod!"

and greatly amused was my companion at my extravagant demonstrations of satisfaction. He remembers it to this day.



I threw myself upon the sward, cropped close by wandering cattle or deer, and would not budge for a good half hour, although it was growing late and we still had much work to do.

“A nook within the forest ; overhead  
The branches arch, and form a pleasant bower,  
Breaking white clouds, blue sky, and sunshine bright  
Into pure ivory and sapphire spots,  
And flecks of gold ; a soft, cool, emerald tint  
Colors the air, as though the delicate leaves  
Emitted self-born light.”\*

The spot which I thought so lovely in a state of nature, now denuded of its native adornments, lies not ten yards north-easterly from the farm house.

Leaving that point we proceeded in a north-westerly direction, following one of the old roads, a distance of eighty perches or so. I remember well when we came to a certain fine, young maple tree growing by the side of this road. I walked up to it, patted it, and gravely informed my companion that I should preserve that tree for shade. It still flourishes—some two hundred yards north-westerly from the farm barn.



Then we went northward upon the flats. Hundreds and hundreds of small white-oak trees did we pass among, and the farm was christened forthwith! I was in raptures. I have ever possessed an enthusiastic love for the oak, and its presence here was a complete surprise to me. I was disappointed (how agreeably the reader shall judge!)

in the character of the soil here. Ever after we had left the steep ridge, before spoken of, our feet had been pressing upon naught but the very choicest agricultural ground. The timber was green, where timber there was; but there were large open spaces on the lower tracts where grew few woody plants and little except luxuriant grasses, herbs of sweet odor, the tall golden-rod, and showy queen of the meadow. I repeated a hundred times: "Why I would not believe there were such land here if I did not see it with my own eyes!" My companion was equally surprised, or, at least, sufficiently kind to appear so.

But those oak trees!

Bears, dozens of 'em, as I should guess, had been gathering acorns here, and so fresh were the "signs" that it seemed as if we might run upon some of the creatures at any moment, — but I had scarcely a thought of this. Those darling oaks occupied my mind to the exclusion of almost everything else! Purchase that land! Of course I would! and I remember that I even had misgivings lest some one should see the owner ere I could reach the town, and under-mine me! Thoreau somewhere says: "I could not find it in my heart to chide the man who should *ruin himself* to buy a patch of well-timbered oak-land!" He understood the feeling, as you will perceive.

Well, we tramped and tramped that day.

"You ask what guide  
Us through the trackless thickets led,  
Through thick-stemmed woodlands, rough and wide —  
We found the water bed.  
The water-courses were our guide;  
We traveled, grateful, by their side,  
Or through their channels dry;  
They led us through the thicket damp,  
Through brake, and fen, and beaver camp."\*

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\*EMERSON: *Woodnotes*.

I was in a daze, and forgot to grow fatigued. My long dream had begun! I had met my fate in that piece of wild forest-land! and all the succeeding night, and during many and many a night since, were, and have been, my sleeping hours crowded with visions, and my visions filled with it! It is unnecessary to say that nobody "under-mined" me in the matter of the negotiation for the purchase of the tract. An inscrutable Providence for once permitted me to have my own way,—perchance as a punishment for my many sins: who knoweth?

\* \* \* \*

My friend Charles, the surveyor, was with me and rendered me professional service upon my land on two or three occasions of later dates. Upon one of these an incident occurred which made an impression upon my mind which a thousand years, should I live so long, would not efface! This was after I had purchased the eighty-acre lot which lies upon the east half of my section, and which is now known as the "east eighty" of the farm.

That day we were engaged, with a competent crew of men, armed with compass, tripod, chain, pins, axes, staff, etc., in "running" the northern boundary-line of the above-mentioned lot. We had proceeded to a point distant from the state-road some twenty chains, and were in the midst of a vast "tangle", consisting of wind-fallen trees; the brush and limbs of which were matted with poplars and briars in dense thickets, which had grown up among them. We had come to a halt. I had climbed to the summit of a huge pine root, up-turned there by the force of the wind,—the cruel tempest! which had overthrown the monarch of the forest this root had supported during those long, long years consumed in striving for that proud eminence among the trees he had at length attained — during all his green centuries — and until this last burst of elemental fury had torn his mighty foot from its setting deep in earth where its growth had been perfected! I was



elevated some fifteen feet above the ground, and was peering through the dense undergrowth away in advance of us, in an endeavor to discover our little clearing farther to the westward. Charles stood upon a log below me, engaged in scratching a match upon the ampler portions of his corduroy pantaloons, preparatory to lighting his pipe. The boys were lounging upon logs and knolls round about us, and were passing desultory and pleasant remarks, when, without any warning, our surveyor's foot slipped, as a piece of treacherous bark gave way under it, and our surveyor's plump form came down with the "dull thud" of the reportorial corps, so that, whereas he had been standing upon, he was now sitting astride of a hemlock log. No one smiled: all looked concerned. Charles slowly arose, — put his hand behind him, — drew it back, — looked at it: it was stained with blood! A short but sharp and vicious knot was upon that log, and it had mangled his flesh. A spasm of pain contorted the surveyor's features, he raised his hand aloft, clenched it, and swore this awful oath:

"By —!"

But wait one moment. Ere I write down the oath to which that unregenerate man did then and there give utterance, I desire a little more fully to describe the scene and the actors, that it may all strike you, my reader, even as it struck me, perched in my "coign of vantage" upon that lofty pine root.

Charles was (and is) a man about five feet, five and one-half inches in height. His form is of the *roly-poly* variety. His visage is rubicund, and save when distorted by passion, as of laughter, or by pain, as at the moment I now describe, it generally wears an expression that betokens a kind heart and a conscience void of offense. He stood now, his feet planted upon the log, his form erect, stomach protruding, lips white and trembling, eyes bloodshot, and that terribly significant clenched right hand swung aloft in the air, as he

uttered what some of his listeners, as they afterward freely declared, were from the very first prepared to believe would prove a most terrible imprecation. He opened his mouth and it came forth :

“By — !”

But one thing more ;— the attitude of the boys. They had all been lounging listlessly enough about there in the brush, but sufficiently near to observe without difficulty all that occurred, and to hear all that was said. When the poor surveyor first slipped and fell they had all seemed to feel alarm lest he should have sustained serious injuries. When he arose, therefore, and they perceived his pallor, and more particularly when, upon his holding aloft a gory hand, they realized that he had been wounded, their visages elongated perceptibly, and it could be seen that they held in their breaths with suspense, and felt much apprehension. And when the injured man had assumed the dramatic attitude I have described, — his third position upon the log, I may properly denominate it, — their emotion, as was patent, had deepened by many degrees in intensity. But when my stricken friend Charles had begun to utter that fearful, that awful malediction, why the flutter of an aspen-leaf to the ground, there in that grove of aspens, so painfully still was it — so marked, so terrible the calm — would have been a noticeable event. It did not occur, — for my eyes were gifted with preternatural clearness and nervous quickness during that interval, and it really appeared as if nature had paused in her work and sympathized with us in our suspense, which seemed age-lasting. I recollect perfectly every feature of the surrounding landscape, — it has been stamped indelibly upon my mind ! From my exalted position I commanded an extensive view around. I see at this moment the huge prostrate bole of that pine on the up-turned root of which I stood ; I see the barkless, but knot-infested trunk of the treacherous tree upon which stood, like

the great General Scott, when, upon a certain historical occasion, he delivered a telling speech, the ill-fated man of the compass; I see the tall, spire-like bodies of the numerous dead and dying pines; I see the sympathetic faces of the boys, who, amid the lopped bushes, sat or reclined about; I see even the surveyor's shattered pipe, the fragments whereof strewed the ground under the fatal log. The sun was about half-way down the west, and shone brightly from a sky of purest blue. The long shadows of the tall pines were momentarily lengthening, (as a matter of course,—but, as another matter of course, this I could not perceive), and not a zephyr stirred the foliage about us. A solitary raven, with hungry beak, and “countenance solemnly-sad”, was curiously but silently regarding our little group from his elevated perch in a blasted black-ash tree.

“And his eyes had all the seeming  
Of a demon's that is dreaming,—  
And the sunlight o'er him streaming  
Threw his shadow”

athwart the space between Charles and myself. I observed my friend's lips tremble, and his eyes grow blood-shot, while cheek and brow became livid. His whole frame appeared to quiver with his great agony. It had been enough, as a reasonable person would allow, to stir the passions of a choleric man to an extent even to excuse a mild ejaculation of profanity, and from many men similarly tempted I should have expected something of the sort, and should have allowed it to pass uncensured, and unnoticed. But not from my friend Charles! and certainly not such an utterance as this did I expect! But it came:

“By —!”

I should say right here, however, that after my friend had elevated his hand, or, to speak more exactly, for it was *doubled* ere it had reached that altitude, his *fist*, to about the level of his shoulder, I had begun to anticipate some forcible

remarks from him. When the hand continued to rise I had feared that possibly the emphasis he would give his next observation might be of a *slightly profane* character; but even when he had extended his menacing arm to its extreme length zenith-ward, the fingers thereof still clenched, yea, moreover, when he had shaken that elevated fist a little, I had not for a moment begun to dream of the form his utterance was going to assume.

"I would not seem presuming, yet have I  
Mingled a little in this earnest world,  
And staked upon its chances, and have learned  
Truths that I never gathered at my books."\*

I have heard, among sailors, soldiers, lumbermen and street-arabs, what may with every propriety be denominated *hard swearing*. But never elsewhere on similar provocation had I, nor have I since, heard such language used as I heard uttered here and now:

"By —!"

But just one little word more by way of self-justification: or, parliamentarily speaking, I rise to a question of privilege. It may appear to the reader that upon the occasion in question the writer was guilty of an unpardonable neglect of obvious duty in not interfering in some way to prevent this exhibition of terrible profanity. "There were young men in your crew, — some mere boys, — and such example set them could not but tend to their demoralization. The surveyor was your friend" — you charge — "these persons were all at work for you; it was certainly your duty to interpose and if possible forestall the blasphemous utterances of the injured man, now, confessedly, from the intolerable anguish he was suffering, quite irresponsible — nay, but little removed from maniacy." But I had little time; and had the interval been ample therefor, I was in such a peculiar mental state, — one

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\*WILLIS.

nearly resembling fascination — that condition into which fall the victims of those snakes which possess the power of charming, — that I was totally deprived of the ability to speak or move. It had to come, and come it did:

“By — *Cotton!*”

There!

It's out!

But what shall I say as to its effect! I know; I'll quote a bit of poetry:

“Then for a little moment all people held their breath,  
And in that crowded forum was stillness as of death;  
But in another moment burst forth from one and all,  
A cry as if the Volscians were coming o'er the wall!”\*

This is a pretty fair description of what occurred there just after that *fearful oath* had issued from the pale and trembling lips of the sufferer! For a moment the boys seemed thunder-stricken, and not able to believe they had heard aright; the next instant a sound “like the voice of many waters,” regular, square-built *Minnehahas*, roused the echoes of those old woods as they had seldom been roused before, and — I record it as a historical fact — my friend Charley, though really suffering acutely, actually joined in the merriment!

If the poor fellow had been staggering to his final fall when he uttered that oath, I should have been obliged to laugh. As it transpired it added, I think, at least a year to my life; though it threatened to end it instantaneously, by precipitating me from my high pedestal to earth, so thoroughly was I mastered!

The wound my friend had received was attended to, and found, though painful, not at all serious. Charley good-humoredly allowed us to make all the sport out of the affair we were able, and proudly received our congratulations upon his admirable self-control under prodigious stress.

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\* MACAULAY: *Virgilius*.



But, considering the occasion which called it forth, and all attendant circumstances, the oath of the surveyor must go down in history as the *softest thing* ever uttered; and the sin of my friend Charles will, I think, stand side by side with that of dear, old Uncle Toby, of which it is written:

“The accusing spirit which flew up to Heaven’s chancery with the oath, blushed to give it in; and the recording angel, as he wrote it down, dropped a tear upon the word and blotted it out forever!”\*

But on this latter occasion, I ween, the smiles of the recording angel must have shown through his tears!

I think the thesis can be easily maintained, and desire here to announce my willingness to enter the lists as the champion of the proposition, that among all possible oaths uttered, or to be uttered, that of my friend Charles, “By Cotton”, is king!

Now, reader, just one word with you, and I conclude this chapter: You had all along been thinking that my injured friend upon the occasion I have here attempted (how vainly!) to describe, did give utterance to “as round an oath as ever rolled over a right English tongue.”† You really believed, then, that I was all that time intending to record some frightfully wicked, ugly and outlandish expression as that of the surveyor! You were disappointed when it didn’t come out at the first place where I cut off the paragraph, and at what would have been the most natural position for it; you were more grievously disappointed when another eligible point for its introduction was reached and passed, and no profanity appeared; at the third place of like character you grew impatient; at the fourth you were disgusted; at the fifth angry, and almost ready to declare that you didn’t care a ——— *continental* whether the fool ever swore at all or not!

Now aren’t you heartily ashamed of yourself? Just picture yourself hurrying breathlessly along through my fine

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\* STERNE: *Tristram Shandy*.

† SOUTHEY: *The Doctor*, &c.

sentences, so eager to reach the end, and find that wicked ejaculation, that you did not stop to realize the beauties of the rhetorical wilderness through which you were rushing! You can't repeat a phrase of whole paragraphs, of which, at the same time, you did not dare to skip a word lest the terrible malediction might somewhere lie concealed therein! Didn't you make a spectacle of yourself?

There's one consolation for you: nobody will ever know it unless you are honest (or verdant) enough to make voluntary confession of your folly. Remember the counsel of St. James (V. 12). Good night!



## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XIV.

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"All thoughts, all passions, all delights,—  
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,—  
All are but ministers of love,  
And feed his sacred flame."

COLERIDGE.

"A Daniel come to Judgment,—yea a Daniel!  
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word!"

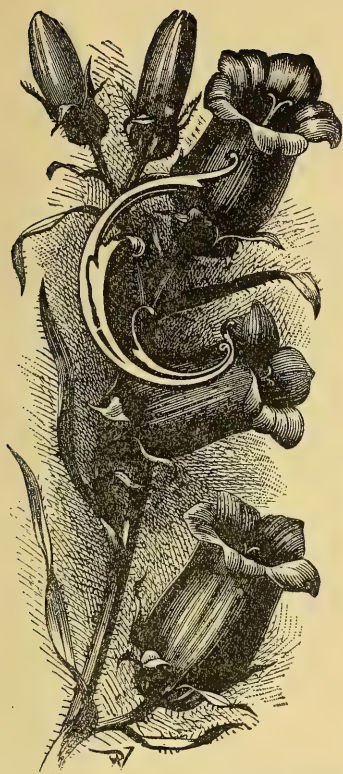
SHAKESPEARE.

"The hungry Judges soon the sentence sign,  
And wretches hang that jury-men may dine."

POPE: *The Dunciad*.

"Posterity! Don't name the word to me!  
If I should choose to preach Posterity,  
Where would you get cotemporary fun?  
That men will have it there's no blinking."

GOETHE: *Prelude to Faust*.



## CHAPTER XIV.

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CONSIDERABLE time having been by me devoted to reflection upon the question, I have about reached the conclusion that it is advisable to interweave a tale, — a love-story, (ah, I fancy I see the gentle reader's eyes sparkle at the mention!), — among the other matters of this history; one, for instance, that shall extend through a number of chapters (say, some twenty or thirty) and which shall not appear to constitute the chief business — the *raison d'être* — of those chapters, but rather an incidental thing, — a sort of by-

play. The idea was first suggested to my mind by recalling the very successful manner in which this sort of thing had been accomplished by the author of the *Breakfast Table* books, wherein the "Schoolma'am" and "Iris" are courted so cosily and married off so comfortably, and all done so pleasantly! Delightful, indeed, are those love-tales! and some exist — but I am not of the number — who esteem them the best part of their respective books. I deem, however, for certain reasons not necessary just now to mention,

that it is best to defer the introduction of my love-story until about the middle of the fifth volume of this work, which, as I figure, will leave ample space for it, like Pope's "needless Alexandrine", to "drag its slow length along" from the beginning, viz: the "accidental-meeting-of-the-eyes" scene, through the "introduction" and "first-walk" episodes, the "heightened-color" scene, the "throbbing-heart" ditto, the "hand-pressing" affair, the "misunderstanding" ditto, the "reconciliation" incident, the "meddlesome-interference-of-the-young-lady's-parents" episode, or episodes, the "proposal-and-suspense" scene, the "despair", the "renewed-proposal-and-acceptance" scenes, the "all-at-one" scene, the wedding and the tableaux! It will be fine; it will be absorbingly interesting — wondrously entertaining — once we reach it, — this I promise you; and should it be possible, I will endeavor to so manage my narrative as to make it convey a moral lesson, also; in the meantime read patiently what falls between this point and that.

There is a certain amiable character in *The Doctor, &c.*, by the name of Daniel Dove, — "Flossofer Daniel," his neighbors called him. This philosopher is a very mild, quiet, domestic sort of a man, who likes his humble home at Doncaster for a very sensible reason — the same that I should give for liking Oakfields — viz: "because it is a very likable place"! Southey says of this Dove that "he had as much satisfaction in being acquainted with the windings of the creek which crossed his farm, from its spring to the place where it fell into the Don, as he could have felt in knowing that the source of the Nile had been explored, or the course and termination of the Niger." This was evidently the disposition of Thoreau; and after he has withdrawn to his snug retreat in that poor little cabin in the bushes by the side of Walden pond, he proceeds to give us a minute description of all the surroundings. Not contenting himself with the use of general terms, or round numbers, he, as it were, weighs and



measures everything with great accuracy, and sets down for us the exact figures. He even makes an accurate survey of the pond, and constructs and publishes in his book a chart and description thereof! Nobody else in the world would have dared to do, if he had dreamed of doing, precisely as Thoreau did, and nobody else could have done it successfully. At this day the whole literary world, who, but for its surveyor never would have heard of Walden, are interested in and even making pilgrimages to the little pond, for Thoreau's sake! But our writer's practice was consistent with the theory he expresses in his book. He somewhere says:

"Men commonly exaggerate the theme. \* \* \* Most words in the English language do not mean for me what they mean for my neighbors. I see that my neighbors look with compassion on me, that they think it is a mean and unfortunate destiny that makes me to walk in these fields and woods so much. \* \* \* Ye fools! the theme is nothing, the life is everything. \* \* \* What is man is all in all; nature nothing but as she draws him out and reflects him. Give me simple, cheap and homely themes."

It I could only see into and through nature as this man saw,—did I possess the art of painting the graphic pen-pictures of natural objects *he* painted,—had I the gift by my just reflections "to stir the hearts and minds" of readers that the poet of Walden possessed,—could I give to flower, and bush and tree, to limpid, running stream, to tranquil lake, and lichened rock the power of eliciting the sympathy and interesting the affections as he could give it, I should not despair of winning and keeping the attention of the reader of this book! But, alas! the Thoreaus of literature are few; and not many are they who possess even the *courage* to attempt an imitation of the master, either in the choice of themes, or in the treatment thereof.

I am not sure but that when the good quaker poet penned the lines quoted which follow, he meant to enforce the doctrine taught by Thoreau:

"Yet on life's current he who drifts  
     Is one with him who rows and sails,  
 And he who wanders widest, lifts  
     No more of beauty's jealous veils  
 Than he who from his doorway sees  
     The miracle of flowers and trees,  
 Feels the warm orient in the noonday air,  
 And from cloud-minarets hears the sunset call to prayer."\*

What lesson did Emerson design teaching when he composed the lines below?

"Because I was content with these poor fields,  
 Low open meads, slender and sluggish streams,  
 And found a home in haunts which others scorned,  
 The partial wood-gods overpaid my love,  
 And granted me the freedom of their state,  
 And in their secret senate have prevailed  
 With the dear, dangerous lords that rule our life,  
 Made moon and planets parties to their bond,  
 And through my rock-like solitary wont  
 Shot million rays of thought and tenderness."†

I am quite certain that Burroughs (a man, by the way, who most nearly of all living writers resembles Thoreau) intended to teach the same lesson in a late essay published in the *Century Magazine*, which is entitled *Signs and Seasons*, and from which I copy a few lines:

"One has only to sit down in the woods or fields, or by the shore of a river or lake, and nearly every thing of interest *will come round to him*, — the birds, the animals, the insects, and presently, after his eyes have got accustomed to the place, and to the light and shade, he will probably see some plant or flower that he had sought in vain for, and that is a pleasant surprise to him. So, on a large scale, the student and lover of nature has the advantage of people who gad up and down the world seeking some novelty and excitement; he has only to stay at home to see the procession pass. The great globe swings round to him like a revolving show-case;

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\*WHITTIER: *Last Walk in Autumn*.

†Musketaquid.

the change of seasons is like the passage of strange and new countries; the zones of the earth with all of their beauties and marvels pass one's door, and linger long in the passing. What a voyage is this we make without leaving for a night our own fireside!"

Now I consider those lines most beautiful! and as for the sentiment expressed, "I say ditto to Mr. Burke!"

This will be found to be the doctrine taught throughout this work. The sub-title hereto will indicate (what was a fact) that I had these things in mind when it was adopted, and, moreover, I subscribe to, as I also attempt in my various chapters to enforce the sentiment (quoted in the above paper) of St. Pierre:

"A sense of the power and mystery of nature shall spring up as fully in one's heart after he has made the circuit of his fields as after returning from a voyage round the world."

It all means about the same thing, and I am glad to find myself in such good company — and so much of it!

I cannot forbear giving one more extract from the above-mentioned essay:

"I sit here among the junipers of the Hudson [continues Burroughs] with purpose every year to go to Florida, or the West Indies, or the Pacific Coast, yet the seasons pass and I am still loitering, with a half defined suspicion, perhaps, that if I remain quiet and keep a sharp look-out, these countries will come to me. I may stick it out yet, and not miss much after all. The great trouble is for Mahomet to know when the mountain really comes to him."

Mahomet must keep his eye open and alert. The mountains, streams, woods, and "all that in them is" approach and pass by a thousand stationary Mahomets every year, and the blind pagans "perceive it not of them." But here sit I at Oakfields in eager expectation that the pampas with all their floral magnificence, the Rockies with their grandeur of scenery the Adirondacks with their picturesqueness, the greater and the lesser lakes, the falls, St. Lawrence with his thousand

isles, the sublime old ocean, Switzerland with all her mountains, — or something just as beautiful, just as enjoyable, just as valuable, will come to me and I shall make it mine! Burton who anatomized melancholy has this observation: "I never traveled but in map or card, in which my unconfined thoughts freely expatiated."

"Well," growls some saturnine reader, "that is all very pretty; now what does it prove?"

There is a little autediluvian newspaper anecdote which I shall venture to reproduce here, and which runs to the effect that in a certain court the bench had just delivered a ruling which to one of the counsel appeared rather questionable law, and he asked permission to read a paragraph or two from a legal author, which he thought more favorable to his side of the case. The judge prevented him, — didn't care to hear anything further, his mind was fully made up, etc. "Ah, yes," replied the polite attorney, "I didn't think to change your honor's opinion; I just wanted to show you what a confounded old fool Blackstone was!"

If then you deny that Blackstone, Coke, Chitty and Kent are authoritative upon the common law, and in addition impeach all my witnesses, of course I have proved nothing for you, excepting a matter similar to what the attorney desired to show the wise judge. I have simply shown that a goodly number of our brightest and best writers — and for obvious reasons I have summoned but a very small proportion of my *possible witnesses* — have employed not a hundredth part of my *possible evidence* — are agreed in entertaining erroneous opinions upon a rather important question.

But if, on the other hand, it shall be generally admitted that the *precedents* I cite possess weight and are *authority*, that the authors quoted are as well poets as philosophers, and that their testimony is, or will be, corroborated by most other witnesses who are entitled to be heard upon the question, and are worthy of credence, — why, then have I gone far toward establishing my case.

"And what *is* your case?" persists that same blunt friend.

Well, it is a delicate and difficult task I now see before me. It is an old maxim in the courts that "whoso acts as his own attorney hath a fool for his client" But the duty cannot now be shirked. In the words of the Moor:

"Rude am I in speech,  
And little blest with the soft phrase of peace;  
And therefore little shail I grace my cause  
In speaking for myself. Yet, by your patience  
I will a round, unvarnished tale deliver  
Of my whole" — *case!*

1st. By my course in locating, purchasing, and improving, with a view of ultimately occupying, as my permanent abiding place, and finally establishing myself upon a fine tract of wild forest-land, I did assume that such a situation was a fitting home for a cultivated person who is a lover of nature,—which I count myself to be.

2d. By making this humble farm in a sort the subject of a treatise, or, more correctly speaking, the text of, or the pretext for a series of discourses upon pioneering, agriculture, natural philosophy, solitude, and, in fact, almost every other conceivable subject that might, whether logically or illogically, by fair pretense or false pretense, by imagination or against imagination, be connected therewith, I have assumed that the theme is one worthy the attention of the reading public, and that I possess the peculiar gifts requisite to give it acceptable presentation.

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*If you can read the stars* you will have the whole case before you.\*

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\*Thus I, in the good old-fashioned, neighborly manner, "borry" of STERNE what the learned and gifted SOUTHEY, in *The Doctor*, &c., scrupled not to steal.



After a little reflection I somewhat regret having inserted the last clause before the *galaxy* above. With that omitted mine were, I deem, a pretty clear case: with that in I may be nonsuit even yet.

But after all if the law sustain me in the rest, judgment can only be given against me on that *count*; and that must still be an open question,—to be proved or disproved—how?

By the success or failure of the book!

It is well: here I rest my case.

\* \* \* \*

The jury is divided in opinion. A small minority have cast their pebbles in my favor, so far as regards everything set forth in the above statement of my case, excepting the one slight clause concerning which I felt misgivings when I gave it in. A vast majority have voted t'other way; and the jury is unanimously against me on that fatal clause!

The prospect is not encouraging. What shall be done? Had even a very small minority taken a different view of that *fatal last clause* I would have persevered with my mighty emprise for their sakes alone; but now this cannot be. What then?

\* \* \* \*

EUREKA!

I will appeal! I will appeal to posterity!\*

\*At the time the above was written I had never seen the following paragraph in the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, or I might have hesitated before venturing upon the course. Tickler is reported (by the man in the closet) to have said:

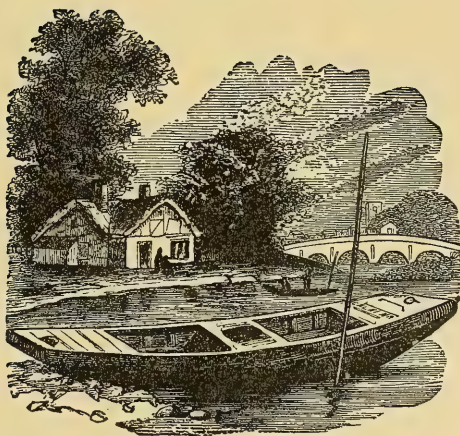
“The world is as obstinate as a million mules, and will not turn its head on one side or another for all the shouting of the critical population that was ever shouted. It is very possible that the world is a very bad judge. Well then—appeal to posterity, and be hanged to you—and posterity will affirm the judgment with costs!”

But 'tis too late; the papers are filed in the cause, and I must abide the result.

I will have a return, and a rehearing of the whole case, if the court please. And do not think that I have no new evidence to adduce, no further precedents to cite. I'll swamp the opposition craft with "wise saws" and "instances," both ancient and modern; I'll overwhelm — I'll annihilate —

I will be calm! But I still mean to win this cause!

"Truth crushed to earth will rise again,—  
Th' eternal years of God are hers!  
But error, wounded, writhes in pain,  
And dies amid her worshippers."



## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XV.

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"But slighted as it is, and by the great  
Abandoned, and, which still I more regret,  
Infected with the manners and the modes  
It knew not once, the country wins me still.  
I never made a wish, nor formed a plan,  
That flattered me with hopes of earthly bliss,  
But there I laid its scene."

COWPER: *The Task*.

"Wouldst thou rest  
Awhile from tumult, and the frauds of men,  
Those old and friendly solitudes invite  
Thy visit."

BRYANT.

"I hear the tread of pioneers  
Of nations yet to be,—  
The first low wash of waves where soon  
Shall roll a human sea."

WHITTIER.

"I wonder not that trees have commanded the admiration of men in all nations and periods of the world."

HOWITT: *Book of the Seasons*.



## CHAPTER XV.

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NE very important event occurred at the farm quite shortly after the General "moved on" with his forces,—i. e., his family. It was the birth of a child—a man-child—in the house. The new manikin was a son of the eldest daughter of the General and his lady, and happened along while his parents were on a visit to the "old folks" at the farm. It was a "mirk, mirk night" of winter which the little fellow chose for a birth-date, and there are those who will long remember the occasion on account of certain comical happenings during that "collied night". The youngster was promptly christened, in honor of the proprietor of the farm, BURTON GREGORY. He is still a sturdy, manly fellow, and it is to be hoped that he will live to honor the name he bears!

It was generally regarded at the farm as a very decided step forward when the "east eighty" was added by purchase to our territory. We had always been obliged to traverse it to reach the farm from the outside, as at that day the other ways of ingress and egress had not been opened. We were in a measure at the mercy of the gentleman whose property the lot was, and we had begun to feel that he was likely to trouble us to some extent, if not to shut us off entirely from

his dominions, which, of course, he possessed a perfect *legal* right to do. If this last event happened, we should be driven to the alternative of constructing another way over private property, or of petitioning the authorities to open one for us: in either case there would have resulted delay, some expense, and an element of doubt as to the upshot would have entered into the matter, with no end of inconvenience attending it.

Taking a comprehensive view of the thing, I concluded that the wisest course would be to purchase the lot outright; although, to be sure, perceiving his advantage over me, the owner seemed disposed to make the most of it, and anxious though he was to dispose of the property to me, his figures were such as at that time were generally regarded as extravagantly high. But I closed with him, nevertheless, and have not as yet regretted my act. The lot is a fine piece of land, and *naturally* a part of the farm. It should never, indeed, be separated from the larger segment on the west until the whole is finally cut up into small estates—and distant be that day!

The improvements upon our new lot amounted to but a trifle at the date of the purchase. Since then we have cleared nearly the entire area, excepting a little skirt of woods—some four or five acres in extent—upon the southern side, which being green and thrifty, it is the design to preserve as a permanent feature. Then there is the small grove near the state-road,—for *grove* I maintain it is, although my father and others will persist in alluding to it as “those scattering trees”!—this is also designed to be a permanent “institution”.

There is a spring near the base of the ridge, not far from this grove and close by the road fence, which has a history:

“That well,  
By summer never dried,  
Has cooled a thousand parching tongues,  
And saved a life beside!”



The last circumstance transpired in manner and form as follows:

It was on a day in October of the fiery year '71 that a gentleman, whose business of land-surveying made him almost a constant dweller in the woods, hurried adown the state-road from the north, closely pressed by rapidly advancing flames, and when he arrived at a point opposite this spring he was opposed by a wall of fire. To retreat toward the east was impossible, as hundreds of acres of forest on that side were wrapped in flames, which darted and hissed like a million serpents. The hunted wretch turned to the westward, and, striking the forest road which led up the ridge, he mounted the latter and ran forward a few paces, when he perceived directly in front of him that the two great arms of the fiery sea had joined, and even during the instant he paused there he saw that along the road he had just trod the advanced lines of flames, already very near together, were momentarily drawing nearer, and in another minute would meet. Horror of horrors! there stands he upon a small dissolving islet in the middle of a tumultuous ocean of living fire. In but another instant his standing-place will be swallowed up. Oh, God! what shall he do? Ten legions of devils are now dancing before his eyes, howling in his ears, and he feels their hot and sulphurous breath upon his cheek!

Ah! hah! a thought beats itself in upon his burning brain; and its effect is magical! It comes not a breath too soon! Panting, choking,—with blinded eyes, and scorched hair and beard, and clothing ablaze, the fugitive rushes back to the spring and plunges in. He is saved!

This spring was formerly kept open by the lumbermen of this region, by whom also the state-road was much, and, for several years following the date of its construction, almost exclusively used,—as there were no farms up this way at that early day. The well has latterly been allowed to become choked up with rubbish and sand, and its site even has

become obscure. It deserves better treatment, and shall be accorded it ere long.

Speaking of the perversity of certain people regarding the matter of naming the grove, reminds me of another prolific source of annoyance, viz: the stumps;—and not the stumps themselves either! We have many stumps here, of course, the farm as yet being very new, the eldest field not nine years old, and the youngest always a yearling, or less than that. Well, it being a new farm, I, for one, am content that it should possess the air and aspect of a new farm. But I have visitors occasionally, or, perhaps, I bring out friends from the county-seat for a drive, and to look things over. They look: “Yes; a fine piece of land; the making of a good farm, doubtless; but those stumps,—why don’t you have them pulled? If this was *my* farm they should *go*, and *at once!*”

I could stand a repetition of this sort of thing a few score of times, or so; but I have heard it so frequently that it has grown monotonous — wearisome — exasperating! Why, I was almost rude to one gentleman (and I know that for a minute he believed me profane) who repeated in my hearing the other day the question I had been asked so many times: “But what about those stumps?” “Oh, blast the stumps!” I snapped out; but I presently added: “with the Hercules powder,—it is said to be quite effective.” I feel pretty certain *that* gentleman will not soon again bring up the subject.

But those pine stumps *are* a serious matter, and there is no dodging the question any more than there is a way of dodging *them* when you plow the fields in which they abound. They will not decay appreciably in an age. They have just to be *pulled*, every one. This will make a heavy charge upon the debtor side in the account with some of my fields. In others the expense of stumping will be quite trivial.

It is a wonderful thing to view, the amount of pine wood which can be harvested from a more than usually stumpy acre of ground! and that after we have it, as we term it,

*cleared*,—that is to say, after the removal of all the woody encumberments excepting the stumps and roots. I paid a neighbor one hundred dollars for getting the stumps out of a piece of ground one acre and one-quarter in extent, the same being a portion of ridge-land where I wished to plant an orchard; and although he appeared to manage the work very well, he lost money by the job. And what prodigious heaps of pine roots did he dig out! Fuel enough to supply a small village a quarter!

Certain of my sanguine neighbors profess being able to foresee the time when these unsightly stumps will be so valuable for fencing material that we shall thank no man to come upon our farms and pull them for their own use. I am dubious about this. I am afraid that day is too distant to be profitably calculated upon.

Though I have thus far experienced, and shall in the future, as I believe, find little difficulty in preserving my stumps, I *have* found it a hard matter, as I have been prosecuting the work of clearing land, to preserve trees for shade or ornament. The enemies with which I have had to contend in this enterprise have been: 1st, the fire; 2d, the carelessness of my men.

In the work of making a farm "from the stump" fire is an important agency; and it is requisite to employ it when the timber and ground are quite dry, so that it will do its work effectually. But at such a time it is liable to overdo its part. It will frequently attack and destroy valuable property. Most of all, so far as my personal experience goes to show, it delights to skip over broad acres of turfy soil to reach some fine tree that, in response to my earnest petition, the woodman has spared,—a darling of my heart! Dozens of times have the flames served me this ugly trick, and then laughed at my chagrin!

But the indifference, or thoughtlessness of workmen has proved about as dangerous to my leafy pets as have the flames. I never yet employed a foreman or a laborer who

has known to begin with, or upon whose mind I have been able to impress a notion of the value of a good green tree in the right place. Idol after idol of mine have these iconoclasts ruthlessly destroyed; and often has this been done after I have taken especial pains to point out the object which I have wished preserved, and the proper means to employ to effect my purpose.

I have never suspected malice on the part of the boys in this matter even in a single instance; but their exasperating work in this line of destruction has often called down upon their heads a withering rebuke at the hands of "the old man." It grew into a standing joke finally, (although a serious enough affair from my own point of view), so that latterly whenever I have particularly desired to preserve a certain tree, I have pointed it out to my men with the observation: "Boys, I'd like to save that tree for shade; now see if you can't find something with which to knock it down!" And they have generally succeeded in finding it!

In land-clearing, as in most other work, the problem sought to be solved is how to perform the labor in the cheapest and most expeditious manner possible. As a usual thing, the forest-growth over an area of a number of acres is felled during a single season. Sometimes the field will contain ten, fifteen, twenty, or even forty or more acres.

The trees and bushes are cut down (best when the leaves are full grown, viz: during the months of June, July and August) and are made to fall, or are thrown, into heaps, or long rows called windrows. There they are usually allowed to lie until a dry time offers in the following spring, when the brush and the smaller poles are thoroughly, and the larger timber partially seasoned, then, at a favorable hour, generally a little after noon, the fire is set at various points in the light brush and dried leaves.

Grand beyond any mortal's power of description are frequently the pyrotechnic exhibitions produced in this manner. The flames, at first in narrow columns, shoot up to heaven;





WINTER SCENE IN CENTRAL MICHIGAN.





gathering strength in a moment they rushed together from their different sources, with hissings, cracklings, roarings which cannot be uttered — on paper. A hurricane — strictly a home production, and improvised for the occasion by the great and increasing heat — augments the fury of the fire which rages like a maddened demon, and rushes with the speed of the whirlwind across the broad field.

Supposing, fond, foolish, tree-loving farmer! you had left standing out in the middle there a few beautiful oaks and maples, around which you had, at considerable expense, cleared off a space by hauling away the logs and carrying off the brush. Does it appear as if your little grove would be able to withstand the fury of this *storm* of fire? Why, it often happens that portions of the great green wall of the forest itself, which stands to the leeward of the burning field, is blasted and shriveled by the terrible breath of this leviathan of conflagrations!

When everything results in the manner described,—and, as man and boy, many and many such scenes have I witnessed,—the farmer obtains what for nearly a year he has been praying for, viz: “a good burn”.

This last is the common expression used. It means much to the poor pioneer. It means that the flames have done for him in the twinkling of an eye, as it were, a vast amount of labor, conferring a benefit which is well nigh incalculable. He is a wealthier man by some hundreds of dollars, probably, than he was an hour ago. His farm is broader. Its productive capacity is increased, it may be, three or four fold; for, although the logs remain upon the blackened field, Indian corn, potatoes, beans, and many other varieties of crops may be grown this first season with trifling expense of cultivation, and none of weed-killing. With the happy pioneer-farmer the important thing has been achieved: the widening of his cultivable fields,—and, as a usual thing, he mourns little over the destruction of a few green trees, more or less.

There comes a time, certainly, in the history of every district when, the forest timber having grown valuable as raw material for lumber, shingles, fuel, etc., the clearing of land loses much of the wholesale character which has here been described, and it becomes possible and practicable to preserve such of the forest trees as in the farmer's judgment are best worth saving. The bulk of the timber is cut and removed slowly and at intervals, and the aid of fire in the fields is seldom invoked. To be sure some of the brush is burned; but perhaps the major portion of this even is first cut into short sections and the reduction to gases and ashes takes place within the stove.

Most good men whose minds are to some extent cultivated, discover a generous love of trees. Classic poetry is full of this feeling, and the great English bards of the Elizabethan age have few pages upon which the out-cropping of the sentiment is not seen. It would seem that, of all men, farmers most should possess this feeling and cultivate it. English husbandmen appear to do both to a greater extent than our own; but this may be owing to some peculiarity in the system of farming in vogue in the great little island. Undoubtedly, too, the literature most popular with that people has had its effect. Such poems as Thompson's *Seasons* and Cowper's *Task*, probably more widely read in Britain than in our own country, have beyond doubt exerted a great influence in developing the sentiment there. But all of our own eminent poets appear to share the feeling that was the inspiration and the life of Thompson's, Cowper's, and Wordsworth's muses; and not a few of our best prose writers give evidence that their hearts are susceptible to this sentiment also.

That ornament of our profession, the great and humane Horace Greeley, is well recognized as a worshipper at this altar. He formally announced that the forest at Chappaqua was peculiarly his own field,\* and here he pruned, clipped, planted and shaped endlessly, and with what inward and

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\**Recollections of a Busy Life.*

heart-felt delight none will ever know! Holmes, the *Autocrat*, *Professor*, and *Poet*, at the *Breakfast-table* and elsewhere, (who is also a farmer after the order of the Chappaquan), is a devotee in the temple of the sylvan gods; and he gives utterance to his feelings thus:

“I want you to understand that I have a most intense, passionate fondness for trees in general, and have had several romantic attachments to certain trees in particular.”\*

In another place he recurs to this subject as follows: “I shall speak of trees as we see them, love them, adore them in the fields, where they are alive, holding their green sun-shades over our heads, talking to us with their hundred thousand whispering tongues.”

I recognize in that paragraph the utterance of a true lover of trees,—and I can’t help loving the man for his words.

In a late number of one of the grandest of the monthlies, to wit: *Harper’s Magazine*, I find a paper from the pen and heart of W. H. Gibson, which embodies many beautiful and some striking thoughts upon the subject with which I am at present engaged. I believe I shall be pardoned by everyone concerned—certainly by the reader of these pages—if I reproduce here a generous portion of the noble essay of this poet-artist. The inspiration of a genuine love of trees may be felt in every word of the following lines, descriptive of the woods in winter:

“Let us walk out into the inviting woods. The trees can never be so fully seen as now. Their painted trunks, relieved against this neutral foil of snow, disclose a surprising wealth of color, and the exquisite tracery of branch and twig, the essential elements of the tree’s beauty and character, heretofore largely concealed by the perishable garniture of foliage, is now revealed. The true tree, freed from all disguise, stands forth like an athlete stripped for the contest. Observe the soft, blending tones on the bole of this smooth, dappled beech. See the infinity of refined grays, browns, and greens

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\* *Autocrat*.

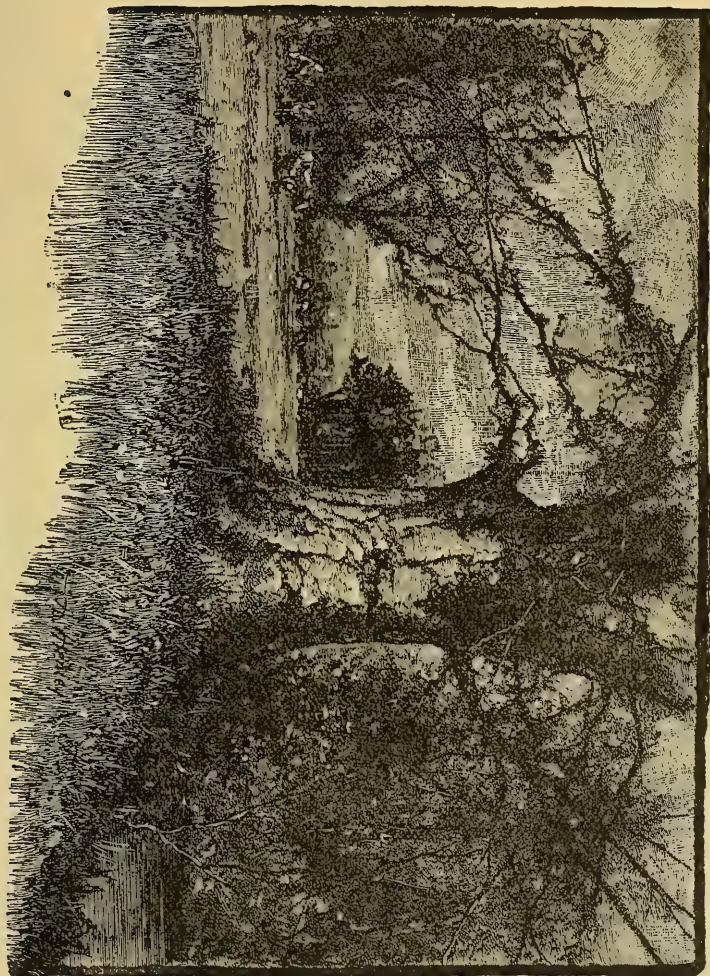
which everywhere spread and intermelt upon its surface. 'The painted beech,' it has been happily called. Yes, it is the palette of the sylvan studio. It is Dame Nature's sampler. Upon its gray surface she mixes and tests her sober and subtler tints, to be afterward disposed in those artfully artless contrasts throughout the landscape. You shall find this silvery sample on yonder rock-maple disposed in one telling splash, divided vertically by the brown fissures of the bark. This bright ochery remnant reappears on the hickory beyond, in strong brilliant touches, here and there upon the shingly shales; and the broad rock hard by has received lavish decoration in mottled circles of this pale sage green. Here is the array of tints with which she paints the antiquated stone walls, and here the sheeny gray by which she has reclaimed the rambling miles of splintered rails. The virescent drab of poplar, the rosy ash of young maple, and the varied mosaic of the mossy boulder, all find their complement here.

"With its clean, trim contour and bright smooth complexion, we may readily appreciate the estimate of Thoreau: 'No tree has so fair a bole or so handsome an instep as the beech.' This latter feature, however, is often lost in the woods, as the trees stand knee-deep in snow, and the comely slope of their feet, clad in velvety moss, is concealed from view.

"It is a common error to suppose that winter effaces the distinctions of individuality among the various trees. Nothing can be farther from the truth. 'Are you the friend of your friend's thoughts, or of his buttons?' asks Emerson, as though we should know our companion only by his dress. Many of our trees announce themselves even more distinctly in February than in June. The shagbark was never barked as now. The white birch reveals many more of her distinctive pallid features; and in this unseasonable weather the tattooed buff satin dress of her cousin, the yellow birch, seems more than ever conspicuous. The tupelo never more effectually asserted its precious whimsicality. The white oak audibly rustles its identity; and the marbled buttonwood tree



A NOBLE BEECH.



hangs out a tell-tale label from every twig. Look at this scraggly silhouette against the sky over this lichen-painted wall. Who needs the hint of the brown frozen apple lodged among the twigs to call its name? Is it not written in every angle of its eccentric spray, or even in its shadow in the snow? Likewise the elm with pendant nest, the spiral fluted horn-beam, and sugar-maple too. Who would not know each from a fragment of its bark? Scarcely in a less degree do the linden, the ash, the various willows, oaks, and maples, the chestnut and the tulip tree assert their individuality and claim recognition. To the curious observer they soon become familiar, and he can name them all at a glance."

We have very few beeches upon our domain, I regret to say. One remarkably fine tree of the species there is in the woods some eighty rods to the northward from the farm barn; and at least one beautiful, though smaller sized one, near the point where the western highway crosses the Waterloo.

Then there is the Farmer of Lenox — a farmer after my own heart is he, his name is Beecher,—how ardent his love for my idols! you can feel the warm generous current thereof pouring forth in the following paragraph:

"Our first excursion in Lenox was one of salutation to our notable trees. We had a nervous anxiety to see that the axe or the lightning had not struck them; that no worm had gnawed at the root or cattle at the trunk; that their branches were not broken nor their leaves failing from drought. We found them all standing in their uprightness. They lifted up their heads toward heaven, and sent down to us from all their branches a *leafy whisper of recognition and affection*. Blessed be the dew that cools their evening leaves, and the rains that quench their daily thirst! May the storm be as merciful to them when, in winter, it roars through their branches, as a harper to his harp!"\*

The above is inimitable!

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\**Star Papers*, p. 273.

This writer relates that there is now flourishing at East Hampton, on Long Island, an orchard planted by his father, and that the latter used to say that after an absence from home his first impulse, the family greeting over, was to go out and examine every tree "from root to top." And the author of the *Star Papers* adds:

"No man that ever planted a tree, or loved one, but knows how to sympathize with this feeling. A tree that you have planted is born to you. It becomes a member of your family, and looks to you as a child for love and care."

I pause here long enough to give utterance to a single note of lamentation. There is one thing I sadly miss at Oakfields; and 'tis a blessing that time alone can supply: an ancient orchard! Not a covetous man I, still I do envy the fortunate farmer who possesses one of those half-century-old, but still thrifty apple-orchards I sometimes see in my trips abroad. It is not so much the fruit I miss — for money will command much, and our "wild orchard" almost yearly yields an abundance of certain varieties of most delicious fruit — but the trees, and the associations!

It is undoubtedly a matter to lament that our pioneer-farmers, *i. e.*, the men who, in the language of Greeley, are "making rather than working" farms, are not, as a rule, more deeply imbued with a love of trees. But it must be confessed that the spirit of their business is rather against its development. With them the forest is an enemy to be overcome. Their entire employment until their fields are cleared and tillable is a warfare against trees. They have quite too many of them; and, as in most cases, poverty renders existence to them a matter-of-fact and dead-in-earnest struggle for subsistence for selves and loved ones, to feel as I have expressed a desire they might feel in this matter would demand of them the exercise of a Christian grace, as well as of a sound taste, for "love thy trees" would almost seem like another form of the command, "love thine enemies."





SPECIMEN OF FRUIT FROM THE "WILD ORCHARD" AT OAKFIELDS.

There are those among our makers of farms, however, who worship trees and flowers with all the fervency of a poet like Thoreau. With them the lifting up of their hands against the green forests is done in no spirit of bitterness. They destroy trees while they love them, and their plans for a campaign against the Titans of the wood are full of merciful provisions for the saving of lives. They cut down trees to plant others in their places. They plan groves and parks. They plant orchards early. The homes of this class of pioneers become bowers of beauty despite the roughness incident to half-conquered nature about the sites. The grounds about their dwellings bear witness to the taste of the owners, in their graceful shade; and the road-lines of their farms are frequently ornamented with trees planted by the owners' hands—lasting monuments to their good taste and generous spirit! A man of this character will prove, in the long run, of incalculable benefit to a community, for his example will prove infectious, and by insensible degrees its influence will extend far and wide.

From the beginning of my work here, there has always been quite a friendly interest taken in the farm by the people of the county-seat. We have had multitudes of visitors every season, and if our roads had been a little smoother doubtless there would have been a still larger amount of driving out this way. Lawyers, doctors, editors, bankers, printers, merchants, have all been here, and representatives of all these classes at different times have lent useful assistance in the work we have been engaged in,—doing this, of course, from a love of the exercise and the romance of the thing. When we “raised” the frame of the big barn a large wagon-load of the best young men of town, comprising teachers, students, attorneys, physicians, etc., was driven out hither, and the gallant boys did me yeomen’s service, too! These same youngsters (and some of them were oldsters) proved no feather-weights, allow me to add, when it came time to discuss



the substantial edibles spread by the good house-wife on the long table in the dining-room.

My rustic neighbors are various in character and nationality. There are some "to tie to"; and some with whom it would not be safe to make such experiment. However, I am rather proud of them as a class, and gratified to deem myself upon the best of terms with all. If not every one absolutely reliable, perfect in all things, precisely what I could wish him, (and myself as well), I console myself with the reflection that there are few communities extant composed exclusively of faultless people, and I am thankful for the good gifts I have received.

When you come to reflect upon it, what a comfortable thing a strictly honest neighbor is, anyhow! a man thoroughly trustworthy,—“whose words are bonds, whose oaths are oracles!” How you learn to lean upon him! How readily you fly to him when you need counsel, or when you wish to leave delicate or important business to be done in your absence! Thoreau quaintly remarks that “it is a great encouragement when an honest man condescends to make this earth his home.” Pope, you know, sings and says truly:

“An honest man’s the noblest work of God.”

And honest old Greek Hesiod — what a noble neighbor must the venerable poet himself have made in his time! — has the following in *Works and Days*:

“He hath a treasure by his fortune signed  
Who hath a neighbor with an honest mind!”

Let us be grateful that there are still among us going to and fro quietly, “upon their own affairs intent,” a few who do “live by old ethics and the classical rule of honesty.”\* Let us duly value and cherish them; for, on the other hand, who of us has not learned by bitter experience the truth of the proverb, “Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth or a foot out of joint.”†

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\*SIR THOMAS BROWNE: *Christian Morals*, Part I, § 12.

†Proverbs, Chapter XXXV, 19.

Of course there has been much talk among my neighbors concerning the "big farm," its management, stock, etc. All have been interested in its prosperity. Many of them have contributed more or less by their labor (for a valuable consideration rendered) toward making it what it is to-day. They have been niggardly neither of their criticism nor their counsel—good, bad and indifferent; and in short have behaved in a neighborly way generally,—on the whole about as one would wish to have them.

Certain of the citizens of the township have manifested a peculiar interest in the farm,—in fact, their attentions have sometimes proved troublesome; these are the assessors and tax-collectors! My taxes have been pretty high. But these gentlemen have only proceeded in the line of their duties, and I have easily forgiven them.

In his *Recollections of a Busy Life*, Greeley pictures himself struggling to reclaim a dismal swamp, whose presence defaces his beloved Chappaqua. "If I live I shall surely triumph in the end," he stoutly asserts. I believe he did not live long enough to conquer that swamp, but his interesting account of his struggles therewith calls to mind my own experience in a like enterprise.

The better portion of my land, as I have elsewhere intimated, is low and level, and a considerable proportion thereof in earlier days was classed with the swamp lands of the state. We have been obliged to dig long ditches to let off the surface water, which, otherwise, in times of freshet, would convert some of our lowest fields into lakes. We have a good outlet, however, in a natural water-course, a tributary to the Sturgeon, (and which we have named the Waterloo), and have little or nothing to complain of in the low and level character of the ground. We have talked the matter all over, and every thing here is about as the General and I would have it.

## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XVI.

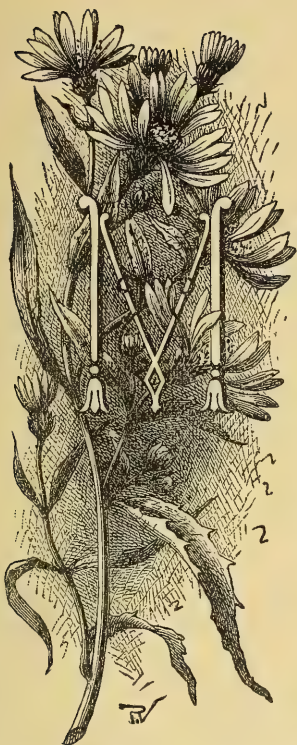


“Oh, Love ! in such a wilderness as this,  
Where transport and security entwine,  
Here is the empire of thy perfect bliss,  
And here art thou a god, indeed, divine !  
Here shall no form abridge, no hours confine  
The views, the walks that boundless joy inspire ;  
Roll on, ye days of raptured influence, shine !  
Nor, blind with ecstasy’s celestial fire,  
Shall love behold the spark of earth-born time expire !”

CAMPBELL: *Gertrude of Wyoming.*

“And now a tale of love and woe,—  
A woeful tale of love,—I sing ;  
Mark, gentle maidens, hark ! it sighs  
And trembles on the string.”

COLERIDGE.



## CHAPTER XVI.

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Y very dear reader, since I "put my foot in it" by consenting to interweave a love-tale among the other matters of this book, the obligation has "rested down" upon me like an incubus. "Fool, fool that I was!" Promises with me are made to be redeemed, and a love-tale it now must be, notwithstanding there may exist with me a total lack of certain or all of these requisites, viz: Materials which ought to be used; ability to properly employ such materials as I may possess; and inclination to the work. And as it

must be done, 'twere well 'twere done quickly.

Pause a moment, madam, and reflect upon the peculiar difficulties which beset my position. This book is not a work of fancy, but, on the contrary, an historical treatise; and as such it is valuable or valueless, according as it shall winnow the golden grains of truth from the light chaff of fiction, or fail to do this labor. Now with Dr. Holmes, whose seductive and rascally example it was which induced me to undertake this perplexing enterprise, the case was very different, and his task comparatively an easy one. He had simply to draw on a lively imagination for his characters and incidents; or, if his yarn had any foundation in

fact, *he* felt no conscientious scruples in enlarging upon and embellishing the filmy skeleton of truth with which he had started out, until it assumed the form that was most pleasing to his consummate taste.

I will drop a little remark right here, that too much disappointment in the result of my present attempt may not be experienced by the reader: I have not at present one half the hope of pleasing that I possessed when I made the promise I have herein alluded to; but as to the tale, "such as I have I give unto thee". I name my narrative

#### JOHN, KATHLEEN, AND CERTAIN OTHER PEOPLE.

Some years ago I was publisher and editor of a weekly newspaper in a small but ambitious town in the newer portion of the good Wolverine State. Possessing a taste for rural pursuits, I had invested the surplus of my princely revenues from the printing office in a new farm, situated about four miles north from the county-seat where my office and residence were, and here, *a la* Greeley, it was my delight to spend all my spare hours. It is perhaps needless to observe that my enthusiasm for agriculture was not shared by the gentler member of my domestic establishment, or that the financial showing of my farming transactions at the end of the year was frequently such as almost to shake my own confidence in the business. However I persevered and extracted a good deal of pleasure if little profit from my farm. I had erected comfortable buildings upon my new place, and maintained a family there the head of which was usually foreman of the farm, while the lady was matron of the farm-house. As a general rule there was also a force of "help" upon the place, consisting of a girl in the house, and from two to five men out-of-doors.

It happened at one time that a young and prepossessing orphan girl, whom we will call Kathleen, was living in the family at the farm. Fair and delicate, she was not of the

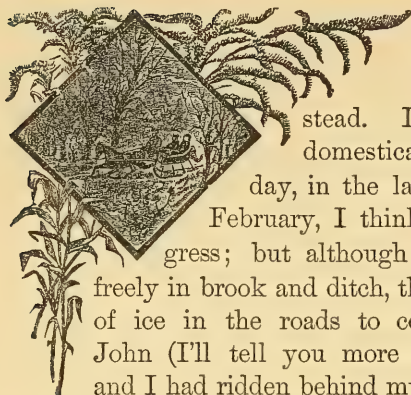


stuff of which ordinary and, generally speaking, the most efficient of rustic female "help" is made. But she had been thrown upon her own resources, she possessed courage, liked work, and she entertained the hope that the kind of fare she would find here would result in benefit to her health. At all events here she was,—the gentle, intelligent, lonely girl,—“making a good fist” of filling the position she had chosen, and had soon grown quite a favorite with the family and all the male assistants.

It all came about naturally enough, Kathleen's coming to the farm; and yet there are those now who think they see something in that chain of circumstances which led up to her installation as first assistant to the Oakfields housewife, which indicates that the finger of Providence was in it all.

“There's a divinity which shapes our ends,  
Rough hew them how we will!”

Her home was away eastward near the Atlantic seaboard; but an errant brother, drifting westwardly, had found a lodgement in this brushwood, and after a short stay here had rendered her assistance to come and visit him, with perhaps little thought of what was to occur beyond that. She came; her visiting season was spent among the people where the brother labored for a monthly stipend,—rough, uncultured, but kindly people were these,—not just such as our young city-bred girl had been accustomed to meet,—and the time came when the question with her was: What next? Really her good-humored, careless brother had not looked far enough ahead to anticipate the arrival of this emergency, and hence had made no provision for it. If Kathleen was penniless, and hence comparatively helpless there, he was little less so. But some move must be made; and among the many that were by them canvassed as possible, that chosen as most feasible was the acceptance by each of a situation upon the farm.



I well remember the occasion of the first visit of Kathleen to the farmstead. It was sometime ere her domestication there. It was a warm day, in the latter part of the month of February, I think. A thaw was in progress; but although the water was running freely in brook and ditch, there was still a sufficiency of ice in the roads to constitute good sleighing. John (I'll tell you more about John pretty soon) and I had ridden behind my slow pet-pony, "Rock", out to the "place", (which is the usual designation of a country-seat like mine in this part of the world, and here means mine), where I had alighted and loaned my horse and cutter to my companion who had pushed on further toward the north, where, scattered about among the tall trees,—part farmers, part lumbermen, part huntsmen, part a combination of all these,—lived various of his relatives. It was in this neighborhood that our "hired girl", that was to be, was visiting. It appears that my foreman printer had met her there on a previous visit he had made, and that her presence there had something to do with his trip thither upon the day in question, I entertain little doubt, but will not here assert.

Of course it was absurd in him; equally of course it was very wrong. John had no business being actuated by any such motive as that hinted at. He, himself, would have been one of the first to condemn such a thing in another. But of this more anon.

It came on to rain in the afternoon, and convinced that this would be taken by my printer as a good excuse for prolonging his visit among his *dear relatives* in the forest, I had early made up my mind to put in the night at the farm-house; and with the good people there I had just settled down in the front room, after tea, to a quiet game of casino, when the

jingle of familiar bells announced to me that, notwithstanding the rain, which was pouring down now as if it enjoyed the pastime, my faithful John and my pony were at hand.

A boy rushed out to care for the poor wet beast, my man entered under a dripping umbrella with rosy face and shining eyes. There was a second pair of lustrous orbs under that umbrella, the slender form of Kathleen was soon relieved of its damp outer wrappings, and the ceremony of introduction was observed.

There was but one sensible course open for us: this was to stop over night where we then were, and to enjoy it the best we could. It was a very pleasant evening I spent, albeit I thought I observed certain mutual glances and other manifestations on the part of a couple of persons, who formed interesting portions of our little company, which though perhaps perfectly innocent, and, under other circumstances, actions of the slightest possible significance, boded trouble for a number of individuals.

Several days later it was settled that Kathleen was to come to the farm-house to live. In this matter, which, like most of my farm affairs, was talked over at the office, I was inclined to think that John took rather an undue amount of interest; but I knew his kind heart, and then he explained to me that the brother of the orphan girl was a warm friend of his, which caused him to feel a degree of friendly solicitude for the young lady so peculiarly circumstanced. I learned later that my printer's acquaintance with the brother was of very recent date indeed, and hence to reach its present huge proportions his friendship had been a plant of unusually rapid growth!

It must not be imagined, however, that my mind dwelt much upon the various little matters I have noted here as occurring between John and Kathleen, or ever at this time with anything like lively alarm. I knew the foreman meant to be an honorable fellow, and I believed the young lady to be at least an ordinarily discreet person. It is true I con-

sidered that her condition was a lonely one,—one, in fact, to render the sympathetic attention of a good-looking, genial, intelligent, gentlemanly fellow, like John, peculiarly pleasant, if proper; and I felt that his was a dangerous situation, too, from certain causes: but I apprehended nothing more serious than possibly a little heart-ache on either side when the period of final parting arrived, which period, as I then figured it, could not be very long postponed.

As plainly intimated above, Kathleen made herself both very useful and very agreeable at the farm. Considering how fragile she was, she rendered certainly very efficient service. Nor did the walls of the dwelling circumscribe her field of usefulness. She lent her aid whenever her quick and searching eye detected opportunity. It was her gentle hand that prepared the mild drink for the tender, bleating lambkin, early left in an inclement season to buffet the cold world, unknown a mother's care. The similarity of the condition of the innocent, helpless thing to her own appeared to touch her deeply, and often was she observed to wipe quickly away a scalding tear, while she ministered to the wants and comfort of her complaining charge. The young calves soon learned to know and greet her, from whose soft fingers they awaited caresses and seemed to know their value above the rude cuffs the hurried and careless stable-boy sometimes administered. One of her great-eyed pets of this ilk she called "Harry", and under her care he developed into a noble animal physically, and even appeared to surpass his fellows in an intellectual way. Poor, pampered Harry! thou wast lovely in thy life, and, though tender tears were lavished at thy demise, thou madest excellent beef at the last! Aye, Harry, thou promising Shorthorn Grade! thou didst die, and thy brethren must die, that we nobler animals may live! Thus has it been ever; thus shall it be! A late American poet thus forcibly expresses the saddening thought:



"Life evermore is fed by death  
In earth, and sea, and sky;  
And that a rose may breathe its breath  
Something must die.

'The falcon preys upon the finch,  
The finch upon the fly;  
And naught can loose the hunger-pinch  
But death's wild cry.'\*

When at length the snow and ice had disappeared and the frosty nights were no more, how zealously, and with what joy was evidenced by her sparkling eyes and glowing cheeks, the transplanted city girl applied herself to the work of cleaning up and adorning the little grounds about the house. Vines and trees were planted and fostered, flower-seeds were sown, foot-paths were marked out, and, in short, the tasty housewife found in Kathleen an ever-faithful and earnest ally in every enterprise of improvement she originated, and the new girl was soon discovered to be a person endowed with a mind fertile in suggestion and never-failing in resources for the accomplishment of their little domestic schemes.

Time sped along; the pleasant spring days were yielding to longer, warmer ones that betokened the approach of summer. Kathleen, by some unforeseen changes at the farmhouse, had become temporarily matron there, and had full direction of affairs, including the management of an assistant, while her brother, who had increased in favor with the proprietor, had been promoted to the foremanship of the farm.

But I had noticed with increasing concern that John's visits to my rural retreat were occurring with greater frequency. I had gently remonstrated with him upon the delicate subject; he had acknowledged his fault and vowed to amend. He then absented himself from the farm a whole week.

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\*J. G. HOLLAND: *Bittersweet*.



Pleasant, kindly, bright, industrious, faithful, affectionate, good-looking—that's John as he was known to me for years. John was an accomplished printer and an invaluable man to me. Rigidly temperate, a preacher of morals, a hater of injustice, a humanitarian in practice,—yet that same John was so manifestly going wrong, and in a grave matter too, that I felt called upon to check him and to chide.

I knew he meant no harm; but he was young yet,—very young for the experience he had had,—only twenty-six, and I trembled for him and for her!

It was, to be sure, rather pleasant to see my printer at the farm. There he threw off all dignity (if he ever possessed any) and, figuratively speaking, kicked up his heels in gambols like a young colt just turned out to pasture. "It is good to see him enjoy himself thus," I sometimes thought. "Poor fellow! he has had few enough of the sweets of life, and such immense doses of its bitter!" He assisted the boys with their chores, (near the house), helped Kathleen feed Harry and the younger calves, worked after tea at the flower-beds, even milked a cow or two, and, decked out in a long calico apron, became "cook's mate", or washed dishes. Then he would romp and roll on the grass in the front-yard, sing hymns with the ladies, and was visibly renewing his youth.

The printer and I were at the farmhouse one evening during the latter half of May. I shall always remember that evening from its delightful moonlight. And where, oh, where have I ever beheld such enchanting moon-lit evenings as I have enjoyed at the farm! recalling the lines of the poet:

"'Twas moonlight in Eden,—such moonlight I ween  
As never again on this earth shall be seen."

I thought the present evening as I beheld the grand moon emerge from the forest and rise in majesty into the "serene

of heaven" above the eastern ridge, of those beautiful verses of Keats:

"The moon, lifting her silver rim  
Above a cloud, and with a gradual swim  
Coming into the blue with all her light!  
Oh, maker of sweet poets; dear delight  
Of this fair world and all its gentle livers;  
Spangler of clouds; halo of crystal rivers;  
Mingler with leaves and dew and tumbling streams;  
Closer of lovely eyes to lovely dreams;  
Lover of loneliness and wandering;  
Of upcast eyes and tendering pondering!  
Thee must I praise above all other glories!

I believed, however, shortly, that I had discovered other evidences of "moonshine" among the young folks, was displeased thereat, and closed the session rather imperiously and suddenly. But notwithstanding my caution, something had been said that night which operated to change the life-history from "what might have been" of those two and others, and will assist in moulding the destiny of all.

One pleasant Sunday afternoon in early June I began to make preparations to drive to Oakfields. John asked modestly, then begged piteously for the privilege of accompanying me. I weakly consented to his so doing, albeit with a rueful consciousness that I was abetting a wrong thereby. We drove out the state-road chatting pleasantly, and when we had reached the red-pointed gate-posts that mark the entrance to the farm, I noticed with what alacrity my man sprang to earth and "swung wide the portal", and took occasion to commend his sprightliness. We slowly mounted the ridge, and John's two eyes were strained toward the "low-browed" farm-house in the still distant vale. Then some object near at hand attracted his eager attention, and his features fairly beamed with delight. Kathleen suddenly stood by the side of our light wagon, and smiled up at us from under her gracefully-worn straw hat.

"We are waylaid!" I cried, as my pony, who was ever looking for an excuse for such action, came to a halt. I had

addressed my remark to John without turning my face his way; hearing no response I looked where he had been sitting and fronted a vacant cushion. He was gone,—over the back-rest of the wagon-seat,

“Gone, like a tenant that leaves without warning,  
Down the back entry.”\*

I turned to comment pleasantly upon the sudden and mysterious “taking off” of the printer to Kathleen; she too was missing. I sat as solitary there as Adam in his Paradise ere he sunk into that deep slumber before Eve, or as that other “lonely man” whom Campbell imagines:

“The last of human mould,  
That shall creation’s death behold,  
As Adam saw her prime.”

I gazed from right to left, but saw not a living creature except a frolicsome bob-o-link sporting with the fragrant red-clover blossoms. I glanced over my shoulder and there beheld the truants walking toward the east the road I had driven over; pretty near together they were, their heads bowed so as to bring them still nearer; they murmured as they walked and were apparently utterly oblivious of every thing around save only of the presence of each other.

“This is rather shocking to *me*!”

“I something more than muttered;”

“I can’t imagine what Malvina will say when I tell her of it!”

I roused with difficulty my lazy little pony, and drove on slowly and meditatively to the farm-house.

An hour or two later the two young simpletons, who, as it seemed to me at the moment, were wantonly playing upon the thin crust of a volcano, slowly walked down to the house. The air of either was graver than I had ever before observed it when they were in each other’s company, and their faces.

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\* HOLMES.

were a study. Something told me that John had made a clean breast of it to her; but I could also discern that there was no diminution of esteem on either side, and I thought I perceived something about them both that was indicative of a fixed resolution to,—do something or other,—I was greatly exercised to know what. A sentiment of distrust stole into my breast. I decided then and there to deliver a moral lecture to John on our way home; for the present I contented myself with making some common-place remark concerning the sweetness of the clover fields.

“Clover,” said John, half-vacantly, half-inquiringly, “I haven’t seen it, I guess; where is it?”

The fool had actually followed our winding private road through fields of blooming red-clover from the highway down, a distance of nearly three-fourths of a mile, and had never seen nor smelled it! He was well laughed at by the entire party, nor has he outgrown the incident to this day, and if you want to see the printer blush like a sensitive girl, casually allude to red-clover in his presence.

I did not fail to “get in my work” in the lecturing line upon the devoted John during our homeward drive that evening. I “rattled him roundly”, and reminded him that such things, while they could do little less than end in a scandal, sometimes eventuated in a tragedy. He was very humble and penitent; and yet I felt that there was something in his mind that he failed to speak out, and I retired to my couch that night with spirits much perturbed. “It’s got to end soon!” I muttered audibly, as I tossed about.

“Yes,” responded the gentle lady at my side, “that farm’s killing you, and if you don’t sell it ’twill end soon in bankruptcy.”

It was not many days later that I performed the feat of rising very early one bright morning and walking out to the farm. I breakfasted with the family there, gave the foreman some general directions as to the distribution of his forces, etc., assisted the chore-boy to feed the calves and poultry, salted

the young cattle, which had come up out of the great wood-pasture and were lying at ease in the grassy lane when I discovered them, counted the lambs, fondled the two fine colts in the orchard behind the barn, and then set out for a long walk over my prized possessions. I had been out an hour or two, and had tramped over hundreds of acres of beaver-meadow and forest-land, when, on returning fatigued to the house, I was somewhat startled to observe my pony and wagon standing at the gate. A little boy whom I did not recognize was seated in the vehicle. John's visage near the door, more haggard and woe-begone than any human countenance my eye had ever before rested upon, met my astonished gaze. The printer made a half-spasmodic and despairing sort of gesture toward the child in the wagon, which I failed to comprehend; then he gasped out:

"She's come!"

"The devil!" I ejaculated.

"Yes, and brought all the young-ones with her," he mumbled almost inarticulately.

It must come out, dear reader, sooner or later, and it might as well be told here as elsewhere. I know it will shock you,—'tis a most shocking affair,—and well do I recall my own feelings when perusing that romance of Read's, *Peg. Woffington*, I came to the point where it was revealed to me that the humane, the "incomparable Mr. Vane" was a married man!

Yes, John, the printer,—John, the industrious, skillful and trusted foreman of my "newspaper and job office",—the serviceable, social, moral, good-looking, kind-hearted John, had been a married man all this time! And not only that: he was also the father of three children! and the old lady, his *Nemesis*, and all the family had now swooped down upon him to claim their own.

This is what was the matter with John. It was an apprehension of the happening of this last thing, and of some other things in connection therewith, that had been troubling



my slumbers as well as my waking hours of late. But John's worst enemy—if he had any enemies—and Kathleen's "dearest foe"—if foe she ever possessed—would have pitied the poor children now could they have seen their white and horror-stricken visages as I saw them,—his near the door there, and her's through the window,—and stopped pursuit and cried, "it is enough!" Misery! Had Schiller's *Louisa* beheld those poor faces, from which every drop of blood seemed crushed out by an awful despair, she might indeed have cried out and been qualified to say: "I will teach the duke what misery is,—I will paint to him in all the writhing agonies of death what misery is,—I will cry aloud in wailing that shall creep through the very marrow of his bones, what misery is!"\*

And poor little Johnny, up there on the wagon-seat, though failing, of course, to understand anything of all this, still perceiving that something,—yea, that all—everything was wrong, glanced piteously from one blanched face to another, and began to sob as if his heart would break.

Yes, John, weak, unfortunate John! was a married man, had been a married man for years, in fact; but, unlike the good Mr. Vane of Read's yarn, he had, upon the formation of this later connubial co-partnership, brought into the business about all the amiability, honesty, and the major portion of the stock of decency the house ever possessed, and within a few years, as must result in the majority of similar cases, the firm had become insolvent from a lack of these articles.

It is a lamentable history, that of John's early married life. Not to dwell an unnecessary length of time upon an unpleasant theme, I will content myself by making a very brief statement of the grounds of his difficulties, and for the most part leave the imagination of the reader to supply the incidents:

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\*SCHILLER: *Love and Intrigue*, Act III, Scene VI.

At the early age of seventeen, an innocent, handsome, well-grown lad, John met an artful, scheming, insinuating woman, some six or seven years his senior. This female found means to gain his attention, and soon had acquired a wonderful influence over the lone, wayward and always susceptible youth. Soon the subject of marriage came up, and the poor unguarded child, who ought to have been with his mother, and who needed years and years yet of schooling and experience ere he should have dared think of matrimony, was inveigled by the infernal machinations of that cunning woman into wedlock. At the age of eighteen the little fool was a father.

Soon enough had begun his punishment, and if to be blamed at all for the false step he had been wheedled into, there is no one not a demon who knows a tithe of what he endured from that woman's insane jealousy and devilish spite, but will say that he has been terribly punished for his sin.

Oh, the tale is a pitiful one, and my heart is sick to think of it! It is a story of domestic discord, separations, persecutions then repentance on the part of the woman, reconciliations, brief episodes of peace, and occasionally something like a gleam of sunshine in the troubled household, eclipsed, however, ere fully recognizable, by another sudden burst of the domestic tempest, never long inactive, followed again by the blackness of despair.

The fault might not have been purely upon the side of the woman at all times; but that for the most part it was there can be no question in the mind of one cognizant of so many of the circumstances as was the writer. I have sometimes believed the wife a maniac; and this is still the only charitable explanation of her conduct. She would at times appear to love her husband fondly, and always professed to be proud of him — of his manly beauty, and his talents — even during her most violent spells, and when her temper had

put her completely beside herself. Again she would behave as if she really hated him, and even proclaimed this as a fact, threatened often to kill him, and upon one or two occasions seems to have attempted to carry out the threat. After repeated efforts at a permanent separation from her, forever foiled by the acts of the woman herself, (who followed him from state to state and finally into Canada), as well as by that tender traitor, his heart, which still pitied the wretched persecutor, and yearned for his helpless children, John finally, sometime ere the date which marks the commencement of my story, had quitted his home in the Queen's dominions with a determination to see his wife no more. He had made application to one of the legal mills of a western state for a divorce, and had been fondly hoping that the decree, which he had full expectaton of securing and which was now long past due, would be obtained ere she should ascertain his whereabouts and pounce down upon him. She had simply again ferreted him out, displaying herein something of that cunning for which she was ever remarkable, and had arrived in town by the morning train after I had set out for my walk to the farm. John, as soon as he could "tear himself away" from his new-found wife, had hitched up the pony and fled — to Kathleen for sympathy — to me for counsel.

It is not the special purpose of this tale to teach morals. These are the actions of real creatures of flesh and blood with which I am concerned. These frail beings may have behaved well, or they may have acted ill; in either event I disclaim all responsibility. But in my dealings with the actors of this drama at the time it "occupied the boards" I was conscious of an earnest desire to be strictly just toward all.

Although it may appear to the apprehension of the average reader that I have involved myself at this point in a labyrinth from which, as the very least cost, much labor and time must be expended to enable me to extricate myself, I am prepared here and now coolly to announce that

my task is near its end. There is an old proverb which asserts that it is generally darkest just ere the dawn, which experience has justified. The case of John and Kathleen was no exception to the rule, and in a few brief sentences I shall be able to give you the — to them, and as I trust, also to you, kind reader — pleasant conclusion of the little drama I have here undertaken to unfold.

John's meeting with his wife had been a stormy, that with his children an affectionate and most affecting one. She had taunted, scolded, threatened, — when, finding him firm as a rock, she altered her tactics, and wept, pleaded and appealed.

"No," said John, as an eye-witness of the interview shortly after reported it to me, "it is of no use. It is too late. I have applied for a divorce, and even at this moment may be legally clear of you. We can never, *never* be anything to each other again!"

These solemn words seemed to have had the effect to stupefy the wretched woman for a period, during which John made good his escape and his Hegira to the farm, as narrated above.

Of course the only thing for John was another journey — and a journey it was, to an eastern city, where he readily found work at remunerative wages, and where within a few weeks his decree of divorce, duly signed and sealed, was delivered to him. Like a bird to her nest did Kathleen fly to him when the summons came, as soon it did come, in this form:

"Darling, I am free, and am waiting for you: come!"

Thus I lost both my "hired girl" and my foreman from the printing office; but two hearts were surcharged with happiness, and while I grumblingly sought about to supply the places left vacant, I rejoiced with a great joy in the good fortune of my young friends. They were married quietly on the lady's arrival in the Quaker City, and they have now at their house just one of the sweetest of little girls!

The poor creature who formerly, in a legal sense, sustained the relationship of wife to our John, is dragging out a miserable existence in a country town. John has endeavored repeatedly to regain possession of his children, but so far he has been defeated in every attempt by the satanic ingenuity of their mother, who appears to take this method of wreaking her revenge upon him. He has been able to help them to some extent; but theirs is a sad lot, and humanity prompts one to wish that the father may soon wrest control of the helpless beings from one so unfit to exercise it.





## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XVII.

~~~~~  
"Old historic rolls I opened."

ANON.

"Wildly round our woodland quarters
Sad-voiced Autumn grieves ;
Thickly down the swelling waters
Float the falling leaves.

* * * *

* * * *
"Noiseless creeping while we're sleeping
Frost his task-work plies ;
Soon, his icy bridges heaping,
Shall our log piles rise.

"When with sound of muffled thunder,
On some night of rain,
Lake and river break asunder
Winter's icy chain,
Down the wild March flood shall bear them,
To the saw-mill's wheel,
Or where steam, the slave, shall tear them
With his teeth of steel.

"Make we here our camp of winter,
And through sleet and snow,
Pitchy knot and beechy splinter
On our hearth shall glow ;

Here, with mirth to lighten duty,
We shall lack alone
Woman's smile, and girlhood's beauty,
Childhood's lisping tone.

“Not for us the measured ringing
From the village spire,
Not for us the Sabbath singing
Of the sweet-voiced choir ;
Our's the old majestic temple
Where God's brightness shines
Down the dome so grand and simple,
Propped by lofty pines !

“Cheerly on the axe of labor
Let the sunbeams dance,
Better than the flash of sabre,
Or the gleam of lance !
Strike ! with every blow is given
Freer sun and sky ;
And the long-hid earth to heaven
Looks with wondering eye !

“Loud behind us grow the murmurs
Of the age to come ;
Clang of smithy, and tread of farmers,
Bearing harvest home !
Here her virgin lap with treasures
Shall the green earth fill,
Waving wheat and golden maize-ears
Crown the beechen hill.

* * * *

“In our Northland, wild and woody,
 Let us still have part;
 Rugged nurse and mother sturdy,
 Mold us to thy heart!”

WHITTIER: *The Lumberman.*

“We live in the best sylvan society; we have the entree
 of the soirees of the Pines, the Elms, the Ashes, and the
 Oaks,—the oldest and highest families.”

Noctes Ambrosianæ, LXV.

“The woods! oh, solemn are the boundless woods
 Of this great western world!”

MRS. HEMANS.

“He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.”

Job.





CHAPTER XVII.

THE lumberman was here before me. The record of his labor exists here in a multitude of pine stumps. There are also several old grassy roads running through my territory which were made by him, and by that other vandal, the ship-timber man, to whose rapacity were sacrificed the largest and best of the fine oaks which grew here. There were old skidways also to be found in various quarters hereabout at an earlier period; but these have for the most part been devoured by fire, or consumed by slow decay.

An old building which was erected in by-gone days, and formerly used during two or three seasons for a lumber camp, stands in the clearing near the centre of the "east eighty". It was called the Kenney Camp from its builder, the "boss" of the crew who did the cutting of the pine timber which grew here,—one Charles Kenney. It was built, I think, during the fall of 1871. It has been occupied by "help" upon the farm at different times since my advent here. In it my first crew bivouacked for several months ere I owned the lot upon which it stands. This was during the dark ages here, and before General Allen's occupancy. The structure is growing old, and the place that has known it will soon know it no more forever.

'Tis natural that we should feel a little curiosity regarding those who have preceded us in our homes; hence have I made some inquiry concerning this particular camp of lumbermen. I here set down, for the benefit of future generations who may read this work, some results of that inquisition.

I find that the "boys" making up the different gangs in the camp which I am about to describe, would have averaged pretty well with those who are found in the lumberwoods generally. The foreman, or "boss", as he is usually termed, was a native of the state of Maine, six feet three inches in height, straight as a pine tree, "bearded like a pard," broad-shouldered, illiterate and rough. Strong as a giant he was, and a typical lumberman in every respect. Many of the crew doubtless resembled him in their more prominent characteristics, and I am persuaded that a portion of Frere's description of the knights of King Arthur's court would apply measurably well to these half-wild campmen:

"They looked a manly, generous generation;
Beards, shoulders, eyebrows, broad and square and thick,
Their accents firm and loud in conversation,
Their eyes and gestures, eager, sharp and quick,
Showed them prepared on proper provocation
To give the lie, pull noses, stab, and kick."

It is certain that no better description than this of a crew of men where all resemble the "boss" of Kenney's camp, could be given. The boys are gathered together from the lumberwoods of Maine, Ontario, Nova Scotia, etc., and many of them are of huge stature,—the animal part being well developed throughout,—ignorant and uncouth in their manners, but generous and humane often,—prompt in the offices of friendship, and equally quick in quarrel and hot when engaged:

"They cannot read and so don't lisp in criticism;
Nor write and so they don't affect the muse;
Were never caught in epigram nor witticism;
Have no romances, sermons, plays, reviews."*

*BYRON: *Beppo*.

Or if they have any of these things they are not of the learned character our poet alludes to, and they form no large part of their life, the latter being one generally of prolonged periods of toil in the woods and on the streams, alternated with brief periods of wild revelry and debauch in the border towns.

In its original and complete form the "shanty"* consisted of two separate buildings standing some fifteen feet asunder. The walls of these were of pine boards, set on end, and the roofs were of shingles. The space between the buildings was roofed over with boards, but was left open on the sides. The northerly building, the same being the one still standing, contained the camp-kitchen; in the southerly building were the sleeping and sitting apartments of the crew. A short distance further south were the stables, shop, etc. Of these the walls were of logs and the roofs of boards.

The site of the camp is low; the forest growth about it was a mixed one, oak, elm, and ash trees abounding, and upon the ridge just to the eastward and northward were many pines, the stumps whereof still remain. The buildings

"Stood embosomed in a happy valley
 Covered by high woodlands, where the Druid oak
 Stood like Caractacus in act to rally
 His hosts with broad arms 'gainst the thunder-stroke;
 And from beneath its boughs were seen to sally
 The dappled foresters, as day awoke,—
 The bounding stag swept down with all his herd
 To quaff a brook which murmured like a bird."†

It is somewhat rare that lumber-camps are constructed so largely of such civilized materials as boards and shingles as were those I here describe. The explanation here is that the situation was near town, and the work was being done for a gentleman who owned a large mill there, at which both these articles were manufactured.

*The common appellation of buildings in the woods.

†*Don Juan*.

Thus have I given a faithful and tolerably clear account of the habitation and personal appearance of the Goths and Vandals who overran this territory at an early day, and



made havoc of the rich forest growths,—destroying the fairest works of nature here, even as their prototypes destroyed the works of art in Italy! It would be difficult to make even an approximate estimate in dollars of the value of the timber—pine and oak—of which the land I now own has been robbed: I have no doubt, however, that it would run into figures of four ciphers.

The pine logs cut here were for the most part hauled to the Sturgeon creek, a small tributary of the Tittabawassee river, and whose mouth is about a half-mile above the county-seat. This creek lies to the westward of the farm, and at its nearest point is distant therefrom one mile. The logs were floated down this stream to the river during the spring freshets. The oak timber was hauled directly to the town.

I have no sentimental feelings connected with the exodus of the pine trees,—I can spare them well,—but I do regret the loss of those fine oaks! Had I been able to save a portion of them only, such as I would have selected! I would

have bound myself by contract, too—and that willingly—not to convert a single tree of them into a merchantable commodity. I want the trees whole and alive,—and they should have stood and gladdened every eye turned this way while my rule lasted here, and for a period as much beyond that as I could have provided for by condition of will or stipulation of contract! The mercenary iconoclasts* didn't destroy all my oaken idols however. I have hundreds of small ones left, and some still of very fair dimensions.

I have given you simply a plain description of the lumber-camp, with a sort of *guess* at the character of its *personnel*. There is naught now to prevent us, reader, from exercising our (cultivated) imaginations to develop a full picture of the life-drama at an earlier day enacted upon this narrow stage. We may suppose—anything we choose, of course—hence we will play we are at the camp. It is about 3:30 of a bristling winter morning. The male cook is astir, and so are the teamsters. Lights are flashing about the stables, and rousing fires are going in both camps. The savory odor of baked pork and beans—not strictly in the Boston, but more nearly in the "State-of-Maine" style—floats appetizingly on the frosty air. Tea, black and strong too, it may be guessed, will form the "wash" at this early meal. The rattle of tin apprises the visitor that the shelf and tableware are largely of this variety of plate. The clear voice of the energetic and ubiquitous "boss" rings out and echoes in the dense black woods, and in reply are heard the notes of the owl, or, mayhap, the dismal howl of the wolf. There is a general stir now: the breakfast hour is at hand. At the men's camp are heard various sounds: The voiceful yawn, the petulant snarl—for it is both early and cold,—the crisp and ready oath, the kicking on of frozen boots, the swashing of water, the slam-

*I'm calling "hard names" I know—to spell and pronounce! but the wretches to whom they are applied deserve such tasks to do for penance.

ming to and fro of the door — from which comes an unwhole-
some smell,—and then, at the blunt announcement, “Breck-
fus ready”! there is a general rush, as if life itself depended
upon eating!—which, come to reflect, is pretty nearly
the case.

Forth from the sleeping camp pour the boys,

“As bees bizz out wi’ angry fyke
When plundering herds assail their byke.”*

Pell-mell for the cook’s den they crowd; and, like the mailed
retainers of old Baron Rudiger, pour

“On through the portal’s frowning arch,
And throng around the board!”

Let’s enter with these rough-hewn men and win a view of
the interior of the “cook’s shanty”.

“Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlor splendors of that festive place!”†

The most prominent and interesting object at this hour is
the long clothless table of undressed pine lumber, about
which stand benches of like material. Two long ranks of
round tin plates, each guarded on the right flank by a basin
of the same metal filled with a steaming fluid that appears as
if it might have been dipped from the Black Sea, mark the
places of the eaters. There are piles of bread, white and
brown, pyramids of potatoes boiled with their clothes on,
there are butter, fried pork swimming in its own fat, black
molasses,—yea, and there are the beans, in the original pack-
ages—that is to say, in the very kettles in which they were
baked—at either extremity of the table. No grace is said
of which the ear is cognizant; no cumbrous ceremony is
observed;—all this exercise of breaking fast is conducted
with that beautiful and primitive simplicity which marks the
banqueting of a pack of half-famished wolves. “Pitch in”

* BURNS: *Tam O’Shanter*.

† GOLDSMITH: *Deserted Village*.

appears to be the motto, and all the boys have learned it. At this rate it does not take a very lengthy period for a crew of from twenty-five to forty stalwart and hearty men to consume a very handsome quantity of "chuck".* But they persevere nobly at the table, do these "boys", and be the meal what it may, breakfast, dinner, supper, or Sunday lunch, it never "comes amiss" to the lumberman,— he always "takes to it kindly", and does it ample justice.

Along the table view a double-row of uncouth, unkempt-appearing, "Mackinaw-clad"† men, with shaggy, unshorn heads, eager eyes, and prominent elbows, ruddy, fleshy faces — not over-cleanly, hungry, white teeth — snapping greedily, catching and clawing fingers! Huge morsels, poorly masticated, are crowded into all-too-narrow throats, the ley-like tea is freely poured on, and, *some how*, down it all goes to make room for what is crowding hard after. Cook and cooke‡ fly about like veritable "devil's darning-needles" to keep all these wonderful *hash-traps*§ in motion. Indeed, occasionally, when I have been an eye-witness of one of these gourmandizing scenes at the board of a lumber camp, I have been forcibly reminded of the great Christopher, editor of *Maga.*, and his friends, in the banqueting hall at Ambrose's. The quality of the edibles was different there, it is true, and the drink was something stronger; but the appetites and capacities of the participants appear to have been about the same. "Serious eating, James; serious and substantial eating", as Kit well observed upon the twenty-third night. But finally the meal is concluded.

Out they pour, and now *business* is the word! The different crews, the swamper,¶ the loaders, the choppers, the

* The favorite name for edibles in the lumberwoods.

† The *Mackinaws* are "over-alls", shirts and drawers, of a coarse flannel dyed a bright red or blue, and are very commonly worn in the lumberwoods.

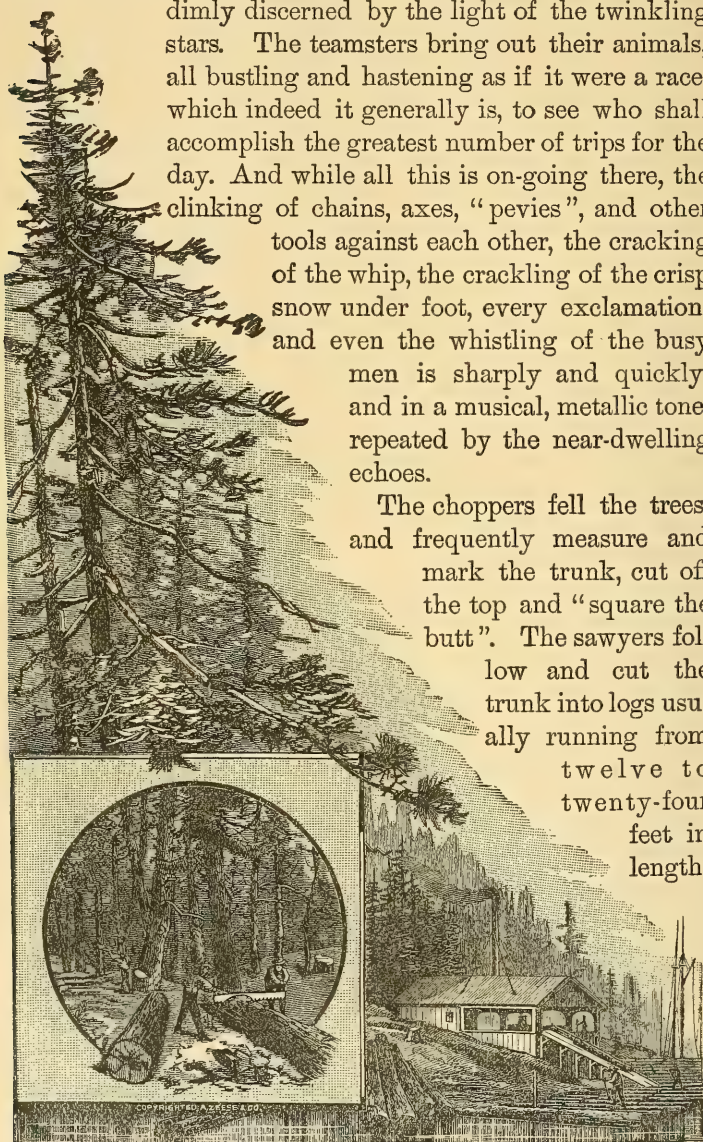
‡ The cook's assistant.

§ The popular appellation in camp for the mouth.

¶ The road-makers.

sawyers, etc., arm themselves with their appropriate implements, and file out into the still, black forest, the road being dimly discerned by the light of the twinkling stars. The teamsters bring out their animals, all bustling and hastening as if it were a race, which indeed it generally is, to see who shall accomplish the greatest number of trips for the day. And while all this is on-going there, the clinking of chains, axes, "pevies", and other tools against each other, the cracking of the whip, the crackling of the crisp snow under foot, every exclamation, and even the whistling of the busy men is sharply and quickly, and in a musical, metallic tone, repeated by the near-dwelling echoes.

The choppers fell the trees, and frequently measure and mark the trunk, cut off the top and "square the butt". The sawyers follow and cut the trunk into logs usually running from twelve to twenty-four feet in length.



The swampers make the side-roads to the skidways (the main roads, as a usual thing, having been constructed during the preceding fall) and the "cross-hauls," or places to draw the team transversely to the road in loading a log upon a dray.* The skidding teams haul the logs along and place them upon the skidways. The loaders assist the teamsters in loading the logs from the skidways upon their heavy sleighs, or sleds, and binding them there with chains. The teamster drives with his load to the bank of the stream, and, unwrapping his chains, tumbles his logs down a cleared portion of the bank known as the rollway. The foreman and one or two supernumeraries are flying about putting in a stroke wherever it can be made to count,—repairing the main road, sanding a hill, and keeping the machinery lubricated generally. And now

"At intervals,

With sudden roar, the aged pine tree falls,—
One crash, the death-hymn of the perfect tree,
Declares the close of its green century.
Low lies the plant to whose creation went
Sweet influence from every element:
Whose living tower the years conspired to build,
Whose giddy top the morning loved to gild."†

At the dinner hour a horn is blown, and as fast as they are able the men rush in, wash and hasten to the table as if it were the first opportunity of the kind enjoyed for eight-and-forty hours at the very least. The crew is not generally on hand all at once at this second meal of the day. The teamsters especially cannot always time their trips aright; and even among the others those nearest the camp frequently fare first.

But, of course, as regards minor matters, usage varies slightly in different camps, both in regard to the things

*A low, flat, sled-like vehicle upon which, when in use, one end of the log rests while the other drags upon the ground.

†EMERSON: *Wood Notes*.

last mentioned and various others. For example, in latter days few choppers are employed, and trees are felled by means of the cross-cut saw. The last twenty-five years has witnessed a complete revolution in the methods of lumbering. Men used to cut timber here and there in the woods; they have learned to *devour* whole forests!

Dinner over, a very brief season is allotted to the nooning. Perhaps time may be afforded some for the enjoyment of a pipe of tobacco, but ordinarily the smoking must be done on the tramp back to the scene of labor. Supper time arrives long after the dawning of the evening star. All are generally in camp by the time the word is given, and the rush of the morning is repeated. Frequently as the eager boys pour forth from their own quarters, or rally from stable, shop, etc., and rush pell-mell to the table, one is reminded of Scott's lines:

“Faster come, faster come,
Faster and faster,—
Page, vassal, squire, and groom,
Tenant and master;
Come as the winds come
When forests are rending;
Come as the waves come
When navies are stranding!”

After supper the the teamsters care for their animals; the axemen and sawyers sharpen their respective tools; harnesses and implements are repaired; smoking is indulged in *ad libitum*, and almost *ad infinitum*; rude joking, story-telling, singing, etc., are in order; card playing, which in many camps is allowed, serves to while away the hours, until bedtime is reached, when the lights must all go out.

The songs sung in the camp are of many different kinds, varying from the sacred hymn through all the gamut down to the most wretchedly obscene ditty, translated from the forecandle. Some of these huge-chested sons of toil possess marvelously sweet voices, but which are for the most part, of

course, totally uncultivated. Still the music they make is frequently very pleasant, and singularly in keeping with their wild surroundings. I recollect some stanzas of a melancholy song, formerly a favorite in the camps, and which ran as follows :

“A shanty-man’s life is a wearisome one,
Though some say it is free from all care;
’Tis the wielding of an axe from daylight until dark
In the midst of some forest so bare.

“We turn from the glass, and the happy smiling lass,
And leave all cheer behind;
Not a friend so dear as to wipe a falling tear,
And sorrow fills the troubled mind.

“Transported we are from the maidens so fair
To the bank of some lone, wild stream,
Where the wolves and the owls, with their terrifying howls,*
Disturb our nightly dreams.”

There were several intervening stanzas, then followed this :

“When spring doth come in double hardships then begin:
The water is piercing cold;
Dripping wet are our clothes, our limbs about half froze,
And our pike-poles we scarcely can hold.”

The above is all I recall of this truly lugubrious ditty; and what has always appeared to me as a singular circumstance is that this is the only song peculiarly appropriate to the life they lead I ever heard among the lumbermen,—though doubtless there are some others. On shipboard, it is said, you hear few beside sailor-songs,—and their name is legion. Soldiers love no lyrics so well as those which celebrate martial achievements or the loves of warriors. Why is it that this third isolated class should differ thus widely in this regard from their brothers in the other walks of life in

*The howling of the owls will be a new thing to most, but BOSWORTH, the author of *A Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language*, says that “the name [of the owl] appears to be formed from the *howling* cry of the bird.”

which the surrounding circumstances are most like their own? Is it that lumbermen do not take the pride in their work that soldiers and sailors respectively take in theirs? or does the reason lie still deeper?

The sleeping place in the lumber camp is either the field-bed, which extends the full length of the men's apartment, usually on either side of the centrally-located fire-place, and in which the boys lie together under a common coverlet; or bunks are used, which are rudely constructed, and fashioned after the form of the berths in a vessel or steamer,—one above another. Straw, or, in the absence of this luxury, hemlock boughs are made to do service in the place of springs, husk mattresses, or cushions of down.

I should have noted earlier that as a usual thing in the men's camp a fire is maintained upon the ground in the center of the room, while the smoke is allowed to escape through a large hole in the roof, called by courtesy a chimney. Long *deacon-seats*, or wooden benches, extend on either side of this fire-place. At the Kenney Camp, I believe, however, both the cook's and the crew's quarters were supplied with huge stoves.

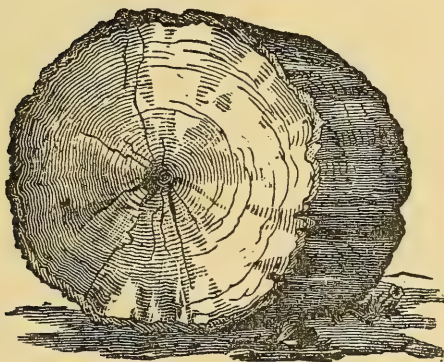
There are occasional features which serve to enliven the scene, and vary the monotony of camp life in the lumber-woods, at which I have here scarcely more than hinted. Disputes sometimes arise, and quarrels and, incidentally, fights ensue. Through the instrumentality of spirits (ardent) a general free fight will occasionally take place, when bloody noses, black eyes, broken heads, and other accidents of war, will be pretty generally and more or less impartially distributed.

On Sunday, as a rule, the boys divert themselves very much according to the dictates of their own individual inclinations. Those impressed with a just sense of the value of personal cleanliness (a small minority!) will generally enjoy a thorough scrubbing up. Others will stroll off to a neighboring camp, or to town, if that lies sufficiently near at hand. Some will tramp about in "the bush", armed with revolver

or gun, and look for *game* large or small; others, at home, play at cards, or checquers, smoke, sleep, wash and mend clothes, etc., etc.

Such is the laborious, monotonous, but in some respects picturesque camp-life of the Michigan lumberman.

At the coming of the spring and the failure of the snow, the rollways are "broken in", i. e., the logs upon the bank are rolled into the stream, and camp is "broken up." The crew divides: some of the boys will drive the floating logs down the stream—this is technically known as "going upon the drive"—others will take their winter's earnings and go to town and spend them rapidly. A smaller number save their money, and perhaps depart from the state to spend the warm season with loved ones in distant states or the provinces.



MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XVIII.

“Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.”

GRAY: *Elegy*.

“Immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long-drawn out.”

MILTON: *L'Allegro*.

“At Christmas play and make good cheer,
For Christmas comes but once a year.”

TUSSER: *The Farmer's Diet*.



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE idea had long haunted my mind that it would be a pleasant experience for me to manage a campaign or two in the lumberwoods. I felt that at least I might in this manner gain some knowledge of men and things in their simplest and rudest conditions, or forms, which otherwise I should be likely to miss. Such knowledge might happen to become useful to me in after life. Well, as luck would have it, opportunity was now given me to test the matter.

There remained upon the tract I had purchased, a considerable quantity of pine timber of inferior quality, which had been rejected by the lumbermen as not being of sufficient value to justify the expense which would be incurred in cutting and conveying it to mill. Much of this timber, however, was of a character suitable for converting into shingles. But for this purpose it was requisite to cull it over very carefully, and at no inconsiderable outlay for extra work of sawing, etc.

There was a shingle-mill not a mile distant from the eastern boundary of the farm which we should be enabled to utilize in working up our timber. After considering the

matter awhile *solus*, and talking it over with the General, I determined to get together a crew of boys (workmen in the lumber-camps — youths, middle-aged and hoary-headed men — are all boys) and play at the game of lumbering during a few of the colder months of the season of 1877-8, and to haul our timber to the mill aforementioned.

Preparatory to the work we erected a small, flat-roofed log-cabin a few paces southeasterly from the dwelling. This was to be the "men's shanty". The door of the cabin opened toward the north, and it was (and is: for it still stands) lighted by small windows in the northern and southern walls. It was warmed by a box-stove, and was luxuriously furnished with wooden benches, bunks or berths of pine boards, etc.

We rallied a fine, jovial crew, numbering about fifteen souls, among whom were two of the writer's relatives, both of whom owned good farms, and were independent of this sort of life; but, like myself, they desired to taste a little of this sort of experience. One of these was the younger brother of the writer, whom we have long been in the habit of calling "Doc."; the other was a cousin, who had journeyed all the way hither from the state of Maine to be with me that season: both as kind, honest, genial creatures as one will anywhere meet. Then there was Charley, a younger brother of Malvina, a noble fellow, too. He was with me, also, a number of seasons besides this. Doc. had lingered about the farm a good deal of the time since its discovery by me. He formed a part of that crew which felled the timber upon the first acre we began to improve,—which was before the General's era. Ah, he was a dry joker in those days! and I regret not to say that he has mended but little as yet. He was always a favorite with the crew, with whom it was the invariable custom when anything went wrong, as, for instance, when a tool was missing from its place, or an unusually poor day's work accomplished, to attribute the fault to Doc. He would shoulder it all with a shrug, and maintain a countenance so

preternaturally grave as to deceive the very elect,—i. e., providing that class of citizens didn't happen to be in the secret, or up to his tricks.

Doc. has been with us, for longer or shorter periods, a number of times since the season in which our lumbering was done. In fact he knows as much about the farm, and how it came to be a farm, as any one excepting the General. After I had taken up my abode at the farm-house, I one day addressed an "open letter" in verse to my younger brother, which was read by all our friends; and as the particulars above given will enable the reader to understand the hints and allusions therein contained, and in the belief, too, that the few facts I have narrated concerning him will stir the reader's desire for a little further acquaintance with Doc., (although a little out of place here) I give the epistle below (as we phrase it in the lumberwoods) at sled-length:

AN EPISTLE TO DOC.

Dear Doc., "I take my pen in hand",
 ('Tis but a pencil: stubby brand!)
 To give you thus to understand
 How grows the crop, how glows the land,
 How fertile proves the yellow sand,
 How yield the clay-soils cereals grand,
 Since of my jovial hireling band,
 Upon the farm, I took command!

You'd scarcely know the fields, dear Doctor,
 Where late you wrought, or lounged, or walked, or
 Sat down and smoked with Angus, talked, or
 Played "duck" with Bill, your keen eye cocked, or
 Else *his*, lest "boss" you catch, when docked, or

Discharged you'd have been by process summary;
 For quite "too thin" were all this flummery,—
 If the General "took it in" that ended the mummery!

Beginnings in sport sometimes end serious :
You felt more safe from act deleterious
To interests of yours, by foreman imperious ,
If these field orgies you kept quite mysterious ;
And so it always happened, however delirious

Your stol'n joys were, with great circumspection
Your eye kept guard, and in every direction
It swept the approaches, for love o' self-protection
In most minds is a natural affection !
But never will I on the boys cast reflection
Who in days gone by wrought for me on the section

Which is numbered thirty-three, of the township
of Larkin,—

Where the wolf used to howl, and the red fox to bark in
The forests — so dense that at noontide 'twas dark in
Their caverns immense — where the echoes would
hearken

Till they heard in the wilds the fierce animals saluting,
The baying of the hounds and the hunter's random
shooting,
The jangling of the jays, the ravens' hoarse disputing,
The whip-poor-will's refrain, and the owl's mellow
hooting.

There's "many a time and oft", when you ought
t' 'ave been a-sawing,
You've leaned against a stump, the "cross-cut" ceased
a-drawing,
With joking and with laughter, a-smoking or
a-chawing ;
Or you've listened in the woods to hear the crows
a-cawing,
The wood-peckers tapping and all the jays a-jawing —
Which marks with us the season when the snow and
ice are thawing.

I can see a merry group a-looking and a-grinning
Round you, standing there, an anecdote beginning,
Or sitting on a log, a longer yarn you're spinning;
Your face as grave as Punch, while all the time
 you're winning
Applauses from companions,— your accomplices
 in sinning!

But to him who loves much will much be forgiven!
In spite of all your sins, Doc., I hope you'll go to
 Heaven!

I know you love me well, and vainly have I striven
My verse to control, but by it have I been driven

To divulge to our friends your manifold trans-
 gressions,
To hint at deceit, and many merry sessions,
When the hours *didn't count* in aid of my possessions:
In proof of all I've charged I shall have your own
 confessions!

The years roll away, and structures artificial
Now stand where the forests once shadowed soils
 silicial,
Where here you beheld the effort bold, initial,

To curtail a little the dominion of Nature,
To destroy the old forests, to change every feature,
To expel all the wood-nymphs and every wild
 creature!

Where the huge oak-tree stood with its foliage
 umbrageous,
Protecting wild blossoms,— a giant courageous! —
Have the woods fled away, the mature growth of
 ages,
And still the axe hews, and the demon fire rages!

Broad fields smiling lie, all fragrant with clover,
Where erst every rood the dark forests did cover;
There the robin is heard, the blue-bird, the plover;
And lambs skip and play where the wolf was a rover!

One meets some original characters among the boys in the woods. We had, however, rather an exceptional gang,—one far more intelligent and refined for the most part than the generality of crews found in the pine forests,—and the difference was somewhat owing to the choice we had made of the candidates who had offered. Several of our boys were from farms not far remote, and these were of an entirely different stripe from the regular woodsmen. We had five or six specimens of the standard article, however, — just enough for variety. One of the latter was a stalwart Scotchman, six feet two in his socks, height Angus, and was called “Pony” for short, (a pony is a short horse), and he might properly have been called “an organized appetite”, for in his capacity for storing away edibles he distanced all competitors. He was a powerful, good-humored sort of an animal. Then there was Dan., whom the boys nicknamed “Come-along”, because he happened to join our force later than the others; the ox-teamster, Steve., who persisted in pronouncing the abbreviated cognomen of “William”, the quadruped he drove upon the “nigh” side, “Beel”; George Norton, who had the misfortune to break a leg in the woods that season; Bazil, the discoverer of *Ursa Major*, and perhaps others: portions of as jolly, awkward and good-hearted a crew of its size, I venture to assert, as was ever assembled in a lumber-camp! Bless the boys! each and all they have ever appeared glad to shake again the hand of “the old man” (that’s I) whenever and wherever since that winter they have met him; and he has a warm corner in his heart for them, every one!

Good times did our “lumber-crew” have down in that log cabin, which, standing in a small clearing in the bosom

of the mighty forest, was for the time being their home — their castle. Many an evening as the rays of light from their lamps streamed forth from those small windows, lighting up the winter scenery around, and the old box-stove blushed rosy-red and roared back to Boreas without, their shouts of wild mirth have startled the night-birds and echoes in the deep caves of the circumjacent woods. The boys will recall those scenes, and relate the incidents which there occurred, decades hence as they sit, with their wives and children around them, in their own cozy “ingle-nooks”, and the sound of the winter-wind brings to their minds tender recollections of those old days at Oakfields.

We planted a Christmas tree that season at the farm-house. Well do I remember it! It was a hemlock tree, of generous, green, fragrant foliage, and we reared it in the front room of the dwelling. All of the boys were interested in the enterprise. And so, also, was Dave., for six years the efficient foreman in my printing office. Dear, prejudiced, hot-headed, generous-hearted, faithful David Mooney! after long, long years of bitter struggle with that terrible appetite for spirituous liquors, thou wast at last a conqueror! He is gone now; poor old Dave! but there is a deep satisfaction for those who loved him here in the thought that during the last six years of his life no drop of the blighting fluid passed his lips, and that his end was peaceful and happy!

Yes, Dave. took part, of course; everything going on at the farm interested him as much as it did myself.

The boys were all at home early in the afternoon preceding the eventful evening; and it amused me, while it touched my feelings, to see them each and all with infinite pains and patience set about and prosecute the work of making their toilets, so as to present a becoming appearance at “the party.” Poor enough, indeed, were the “dress-suits” possessed by several of them; but it was a neighborly community, the borrowing of wearing apparel was not a thing frowned upon, and all got along measurably well. Yea, it

was surprising to view the metamorphoses produced by soap, water, razor, and clean clothing in a number of instances!

It was a fruitful tree which was planted upon that rough pine floor! Every bough bent beneath its burden. No person, member of family or crew, or invited guest, but was remembered, and few received less than a half-dozen tokens,—all, or nearly all, insignificant so far as cost was concerned, were these, to be sure, but,

“’Tis not the value of a gift
That friendship’s hand may tender,—
’Tis not the thing’s *intrinsic* worth,
Though gems of rarest splendor,
That calls the heart’s best gratitude,
And wakes a deep emotion;
The simplest flower may be the gift,
And claim a life’s devotion.’”

It was a merry party; but what do you think I saw there? There were rough-looking, bearded men, who had spent their years in the camps. There were elderly men, hundreds of miles from home and those dearest on earth. There were wild young boys there;—yet not a person present but who, when his name was called by the distributor of the gifts, started as though moved by an electric shock, for everything was managed in such manner as to surprise each recipient; and some, and these occasionally were of the bronzed, bearded, or elderly men, as they were handed the articles marked for them, turned quickly from the light—for what purpose? to hide the trembling lips and starting tears! Do you not believe that, when I witnessed these exhibitions of genuine emotion, I felt richly repaid for all the exertion it had cost me to make this Christmas at the farm a pleasant one for my boys—and girls? Nay, I found occasionally in the course of the evening that my own eyes needed attention to keep them clear enough to enable me successfully to continue to personate *Kris Kringle*.

"The old man" was not forgotten: his share of the Christmas fruit consisted of an odd half-dozen or so of articles, useful and ornamental, among which—the joint gift of the crew and family at the farm—the most prized of all—was a small album containing likenesses of the General, his lady, the girl who constituted the help in the house, and of nearly all the boys. This I still possess and highly value.

I may add, to conclude this chapter, that my lumbering experience throughout proved a very pleasant thing indeed, and it is not at all impossible that I may again sometime, for amusement, merely, engage in a similar enterprise. If I do I shall endeavor to secure a foreman and crew as nearly resembling the old ones as it is possible to find.



MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XIX



“Democritus’ cattle spoil his corn
While he aloft on fancy’s wing is borne.”

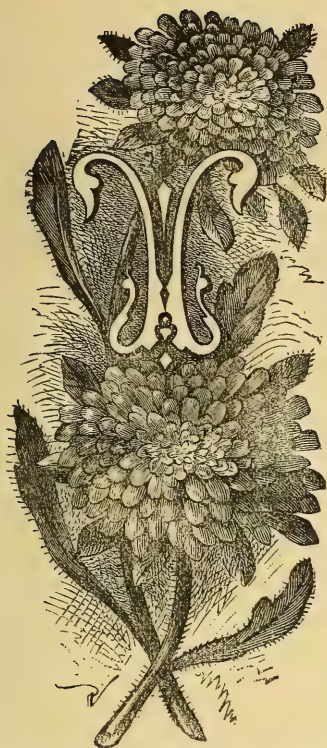
HORACE: *Epistle I.*

“Friend, hast thou considered the ‘rugged, all-ministering earth’, as Sophocles well names her; how she feeds the sparrow on the housetop, and much more her darling man?”

CARLYLE.

“Give me, indulgent gods! with mind serene,
And guiltless heart, to range the sylvan scene;
No splendid poverty, no smiling care,
No well-bred hate, nor servile grandeur there!”

YOUNG: *Love of Fame.*



CHAPTER XIX.

HERE is a very entertaining chapter in that interesting and instructive book, Horace Greeley's *Recollections of a Busy Life*, which begins as follows:

"I should have been a farmer. All my riper tastes incline to that blessed calling whereby the human family and its humbler auxiliaries are fed. Its quiet, its segregation from strife, and brawls, and heated rivalries, attract and delight me."*

How that great, loving and lovable heart cherished this idea through long years, and how at length it bore fruit in

the form of an investment of funds for the purchase and development of a most unpromising, cold and sterile piece of ground lying some thirty-five miles N. N. E. from the Gotham city-hall, and how the venerable proprietor struggled with the tough agricultural problem he had proposed to himself, through the succeeding years of his life, we may gather in part from the *Recollections*, and in part from other sources, including that most amusing if not most instructive of modern agricultural hand-books, *What I Know of Farm-*

*Chapter XXXVI.

ing. The critics have had their teeth in this last-named work, and sly, shrewd, old, practical farmers have turned over its pages, their visages meanwhile disclosing sarcastic smiles at several of the observations and suggestions of the white-coated philosopher,—even as people of the same class, in some future day, will doubtless have their risibles affected by certain of the positions assumed in the present work. But who cares? I, and many others of kindred tastes, have read and re-read both the works of Mr. Greeley herein mentioned, and have been both instructed and amused; long ago I learned to love the author, and I revere his memory.

“I should have been a farmer,” I have quoted Mr. Greeley as saying. He begins the third paragraph of the same chapter with, “I *would* have been a farmer had any science of farming been known to those among whom my earlier boyhood was passed.”

This is a strange world, and the commonest things are sometimes, on close observation, discovered to be, in a sense, among the strangest! The great Greeley, the successful journalist, the founder of that wonderful journal, the *New York Tribune*,—in its and its great editor's prime, the most powerful newspaper the world has ever seen, or shall see,—a man who should not have envied the estate of princes, presidents, or emperors, and who should have taken pride in the work of his hand, if any man ever should,—he “should have been a farmer!” What a confession is here! and what food for reflection for the discontented husbandman!

But had Greeley started life as a farmer, and had he continued to the end in that calling which he has risen up and called blessed, would he have been abidingly content? and would his self-development have been as complete? his fame as secure? his usefulness to society as great?

Grave question, these: I know not, as yet, how to answer them, even to my own satisfaction. Emerson, whose

just thoughts often assist me toward the solution of difficult problems, in his elegant essay, entitled *Farming*, observes: "Every man has an exceptional respect for tillage, and a feeling that this is the original calling of the race — that he himself is only excused from it by some circumstance which made him delegate it for a time to other hands."

Is it, then, so universal? Emerson is almost always right! Then, also, *I* should have been a farmer! But perfect faith is lacking here.

All confess that there is much that is delightful to contemplate in the life of the husbandman. The "Concord Sage" himself, as one has said, half rustic, if the other half *was* divine, has discovered various agreeable matters which are connected therewith, and in the essay cited, enumerates some of them, as follows:

"He has broad lands for his home.

"He is permanent; clings to the land as the rocks do.

"He has grave truths confided to him. In the great storehouse of nature the farmer stands at the door of the bread-room and weighs to each his loaf.

"He is the continuous benefactor. He who digs a well, constructs a stone fountain, plants a grove of trees by the road-side, plants an orchard, builds a durable house, reclaims a swamp, or so much as puts a stone seat by the wayside, makes the land so far lovely and desirable, makes a fortune which he can not carry away with him, but which is useful to his country long afterward."

"Is not the field with lively culture green,
A sight more joyous than the dead morass?" *

"Who knows," exclaims Emerson, "how many glances of remorse are turned this way from the bankrupts of trade, from mortified pleaders in courts and senates, or from the victims of idleness and pleasure?"

Again, he adds:

THOMPSON: *Castle of Indolence*.

"The profession has in all eyes its ancient charm as standing nearest to God, the first cause."

How the poets have fondled this theme in all ages of the world! Hear the bird-voiced Thompson, the darling of all lovers of rural life:

"Nor you who live
In luxury and ease, in pomp and pride,
Think these lost themes unworthy of your ear:
Such themes as these the rural Maro sung
To wide imperial Rome, in the full height
Of elegance and taste, by Greece refined.
In ancient times the sacred plow employed
The kings and awful fathers of mankind;
And some with whom compared your insect tribes
Are but the beings of a summer's day,
Have held the scale of empire, ruled the storm
Of mighty war; then, with victorious hand,
Disdaining little delicacies, seized
The plow, and greatly independent, scorned
All the vile stores corruption can bestow." *

Sir George McKenzie speaks thus:

"Oh, happy country life! pure like its air:
Free from the rage of pride, the pangs of care;
Here happy souls lie bathed in soft content,
And are at once secure and innocent."

The great Virgil has the following exquisite lines:

"Happy the man, who, studying nature's laws,
Through known effects can trace the secret cause,—
His mind possessing in a quiet state,
Fearless of fortune, and resigned to fate!
And happy, too, is he who decks the bowers
Of sylvan, and adores the rural powers—
Whose mind, unmoved, the bribes of Courts can see,
Their glittering baits and purple slavery—
Nor hopes the people's praise, nor fears their frown,
Nor, when contending kindreds tear the crown,
Will set up one, or pull another down.
Without concern he hears, but hears from far,
Of tumults, and descents, and distant war.
Nor with a superstitious fear is awed
For what befalls at home or what abroad." †

* *The Seasons.* † *II. Georgic, DRYDEN'S Trans.*

"GREAT GOD! HOW SWEET ARE ALL THINGS HERE!
HOW BEAUTIFUL THE FIELDS APPEAR!"



That fascinating writer of pastorals, Robert Herrick, has this:

“Sweet country life! to such unknown
Whose lives are others not their own,
But serving courts and cities, be
Less happy, less enjoying thee.”

The “Divine Du Bartas” adds his testimony:

“Oh, thrice, thrice happy he who shuns the cares
Of city troubles and of state affairs;
And, serving Ceres, tills with his own team
His own free land!” *

I have always admired for its enthusiastic effusiveness and the evident sincerity of its sentiment, the poetical epistle of Charles Cotton, *in retirement*, to his friend, Izaak Walton:

“Farewell, thou busy world! and may
We never meet again:
Here I can eat, and sleep, and pray,
And do more good in one short day
Than he who his whole age outwears
Upon the most conspicuous theaters,
Where naught but vanity and vice do reign.

“Great God! how sweet are all things here!
How beautiful the fields appear!
How cleanly do we feed and lie!
Lord! what good hours do we keep!
How quietly do we sleep!
What peace! what unanimity!
How innocent from the lewd fashion
Is all our business, all our recreation!

Oh, how happy here’s our leisure!
Oh, how innocent our pleasure!

* * * * *

Dear solitude, the soul’s best friend,
That man acquainted with himself doth make!

* From a poem that “Flossofer” Daniel Dove used to read with peculiar satisfaction. See SOUTHEY’S *The Doctor*, &c., page 60 of Harper’s edition.

* * * * *

“How calm and quiet a delight
 Is it alone
 To read and meditate and write,
 By none offended and offending none!
 To walk, ride, sit, or sleep at one's own ease,
 And pleasing one's own self, none other to displease!

“Lord ! would men let me alone
 What an ever-happy one
 Should I think myself to be!
 Might I, in this desert place,
 Which most men in discourse disgrace,
 Live but undisturbed and free!
 Here in this despised recess,
 Would I, mauger winter's cold,
 And the summer's worst excess,
 Try to live out to sixty full years old!
 And all the while,
 Without an envious eye
 On any thriving under fortune's smile,
 Contented live, and then — contented die!”



MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XX.

“When the muses nigh
With the virtues meet,
Find to their design
An Atlantic seat,
By green orchard boughs
Fenced from the heat,
Where the statesman ploughs
Furrows for the wheat ;
When the church is moral worth,
When the state-house is the hearth,—
Then the perfect state is come,
The republican at home.”

EMERSON.

“How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plow, that glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen, and is occupied with the care of bullocks ? ”



CHAPTER XX.

HERE is another versatile and amusing writer, a cotemporary of the author of the *Recollections*, more sportive than Greeley, but not more sincere in his agricultural enterprises, who once bought a farm, and who has written many bright paragraphs concerning the same and his life thereon. To perceive at one glance precisely what kind of a farmer Henry Ward Beecher is, we have only to peruse the lines below from his exquisite little volume of essays entitled *Star Papers*, and copied from that particular

paper which treats of "Dream Culture", viz :

"The chief use of a farm, if it be well selected, and of a proper soil, is to lie down upon."

Then this industrious and ambitious agriculturist adds :

"Mine is an excellent farm for such uses, and I thus cultivate it every day. Large crops are the consequence, of great delight, and fancies more than the brain can hold. My industry is exemplary. Though but a week here, I have lain down more hours, and in more places than that hard-working brother of mine in the whole year he has

dwelt here. Strange that industrious lying down should come so naturally to me, and standing up and lazing about after the plow, or behind his scythe, so naturally to him!"

I have to confess to a sneaking fondness for Mr. Beecher's style of farming. It is so pleasant, so graceful, so easy,—and then he has managed to reap such rich and glorious harvests thereby, and for us, his friends, in the book whose title I have above given, and in other books, he hath garnered them up! Let us be thankful to Providence for this sort of farmers, then, and grateful to them that they have had the candor to give us freely their methods of culture.

But Beecher is in earnest sometimes, even when writing upon agricultural topics, and has recorded in pleasant words many fine thoughts.

A fourth one there is whom I desire to mention here, who has wielded a graceful pen in this behalf, and who has been so strongly attracted toward the sweet earth that he on one occasion parted with his shekels in the purchase of a portion of the surface thereof. It was he who wrote *Dream Life*, over which we have all shed tears, and the *Reveries of a Bachelor*, which so delight us all — ere we enter the married state. His agricultural works (!) are *My Farm of Edgewood*, and *Wet Days at Edgewood*, works which contain little indeed of agriculture of any sort, (except, perhaps, of the Beecheran), but which are full of pretty thoughts on various subjects, daintily expressed, and more or less remotely (rather more than less) connected with farms and farming.

Among the wise paragraphs in the former of the last-named brace of books, is the following:

"But the real question with a man of any considerable degree of cultivation who meditates country life, is not whether legitimate attention will secure a tolerable balance-sheet, and the fattening of fine beeves, but whether the life and the rural occupations offer verge and scope enough for the development of his culture—whether the land and landscape will ripen under assiduous care into graces that

will keep his attachment strong and enlist the activities of his thought.”*

But when the leading and practical question, does farming pay? is pointedly put to any of these three agricultural philosophers, Greeley, Beecher or Mitchell, it is plain to see they wince. Beecher affects to laugh the subject aside, just as you would expect such a lazy, easy, jolly, old farmer to do. Mitchell bridles, and retorts thus:

“And now let us *preciser* the whole matter, and get rid, if we can, of that interminable [infernally, he doubtless meant] question,—does farming pay?

“Will shop-keeping pay? Will tailoring or doctoring pay? Will life pay? How do these questions sound?”

Of course our author does not leave the subject there, but, like a sensible man, as he is, he recovers control of his temper shortly, and enunciates some axiomatic truths, etc.; but we think it would be the judgment of the average reader who peruses the fine prose of his book that the evidence therein tends to show that the writer had not met with what he himself would denominate “explosive success,” in a pecuniary sense, at farming.

Then Mr. Greeley, when he comes to this part of the subject, has an amusing thing or two to say, and, contrary to his usual rule, to be as little evasive as possible, he falls to making excuses for his farm.

“‘But what are the *profits* of your farming? You have said nothing of *them*,’ I often hear. Well, it is not yet time to speak of them,—in fact, they are, as yet, unspeakably small. Thus far I have been making a farm rather than working one, and the process is not yet complete.”†

We believe the process was not yet complete when the venerable owner of Chappaqua passed away,—and the pecuniary profits of his farming, like those of Messrs. Beecher

*D. G. MITCHELL: *My Farm of Edgewood*.

†*Recollections of a Busy Life*.

and Mitchell, in the same line, remained “unspeakably small” to the end. In short, as the author of *Edgewood* himself would have phrased it, each of these three pleasant gentlemen, in the purchase and development, at a prodigious expense, of his ill-paying farm, was guilty of an “agricultural debauch”. The author, ere now, has likewise visited that part of the continent, and hence, according to the homely but expressive phraseology of the late “Boss” Tweed of Gotham, “knows how it is himself”.

There’s still another farmer of my acquaintance, whom I desire to introduce to the gentle reader, with a hope of thus adding to the pleasures of the latter. This is a striking example of the modern Arcadian, to which class, also, the author has been accused of belonging. It is Thoreau; and he writes as follows:

“At a certain season of our life we are accustomed to consider every spot as a possible site for a house. I have thus surveyed the country on every side within a dozen miles of where I live. In imagination I have bought every farm in succession, for all were to be bought, and I knew their price. I walked over each farmer’s premises, tasted his wild apples, discoursed on husbandry with him, took his farm at his own price (at any price), mortgaging it to him in my mind; even put a higher price on it,—took everything but a deed of it,—took his word for his deed, for I dearly love to talk,—cultivated it, and him, too, to some extent, I trust, and withdrew when I had enjoyed it long enough, leaving him to carry it on. This experience entitled me to be regarded as a sort of real-estate broker among my friends. Wherever I sat, there I might live, and the landscape radiated from me accordingly. What is a house but a *sedes*, a seat?—better if a country seat. * * * An afternoon sufficed to lay out the land into orchard, wood-lot, and pasture, and to decide what fine oaks and pines should be left to stand before the door, and where each blasted tree could be seen to the best advantage; and then I let it lie fallow, perchance, for a man

is rich in proportion to the things which he can afford to let alone." *

This is very pleasant talk. But Thoreau actually purchased a farm at one time; and thus he relates how it happened:

"My imagination carried me so far [he says] that I even had the refusal of several farms,—but I never got my fingers burned by actual possession. The nearest I came to actual possession was when I bought the Hollowell place, and had begun to sort my seeds, and collected materials with which to make a wheel-barrow to 'carry it on' (or off) with; but before the owner gave me a deed of it, his wife—every man has such a wife—changed her mind and wished to keep it, and he offered me ten dollars to release him. Now, to speak the truth, I had but ten cents in the world, and it surpassed my arithmetic to tell if I was the man who had the ten cents, or who had a farm, or ten dollars, or all together. However, I let him keep the ten dollars and the farm, too, for I had carried it far enough; or, rather, to be generous, I sold him the farm for just what I gave for it, and as he was not a rich man, made him a present of ten dollars, and still had my ten cents, and seeds, and materials for a wheelbarrow left. I found thus that I had been a rich man without any damage to my poverty. But I retained the landscape, and I have since annually carried off what it yielded, without a wheel-barrow."

And regarding this sort of harvest our author adds:

"I have frequently seen a poet withdraw, having enjoyed the most valuable part of a farm, while the crusty farmer supposed that he had got a few wild apples only. Why, the farmer does not know it for many years when the poet has put the farm in rhyme, the most admirable kind of invisible fence,—has fairly impounded it,—milked it, skimmed it and

* *Walden.*

got all the cream, and left the farmer only the skimmed milk."

This is a delightful husbandman, is it not? No doubt from the first about his succeeding at the business—as *he* counted success! Now he informs us how he came to choose the Hollowell place:

"The real attractions of the Hollowell farm to me, were: Its complete retirement,—it being about two miles from the village, half a mile from the nearest neighbor, and separated from the highway by a broad field; its bounding on the river, which the owner said protected it by its fogs from frosts in the spring (though that was nothing to me); the gray color and ruinous state of the house and barn, and the dilapidated fences, which put such an interval between me and the last occupant; the hollow and lichen-covered apple trees, gnawed by rabbits, showing what kind of neighbors I should have; but above all, the recollection I had of it from my earliest voyages up the river, when the house was concealed behind a dense grove of red maples, through which I heard the dogs bark. I was in haste to buy it before the owner finished getting out some rocks, cutting down the hollow apple trees, and grubbing up some young birches which had sprung up in the pasture, or, in short, made any more of his improvements. To enjoy all these advantages I was ready to carry it on,—like Atlas, to take the world on my shoulders (I never heard what compensation he received for that), and do all those things which had no other motive or excuse but that I might pay for it and be unmolested in my possession of it; for I knew all the while that it would yield the most abundant crop of the kind I wanted if I could only afford to let it alone. But it turned out as I have said."

What a display of "agricultural products" such a husbandman as this will be likely to make at the annual fair! Alas! here is a rather more discouraging specimen of the ultra-Arcadian than is Beecher or — or —, the author! Yes, this out-herods Herod; and I am forced, for appearance' sake,

at least, to withhold my endorsement of such a farmer — of such farming!

'Tis true, though (and let the truth be told though the heavens fall), that the author was once impelled to purchase a forty-acre farm by just two considerations, viz: A large willow tree (which he had long coveted), and a romantically ruinous old log-house, which formed characteristic features thereof. The farm had been, truly enough, worth the price demanded for it — to one needing it and able to carry it on. But I was not that one. However, I purchased it — and something in the manner in which Thoreau had proposed to purchase the Hallowell place, for I had about the same amount of cash on hand — and I called it mine for a matter of two years, and named it "The Willows". Forced later to relinquish it, I sold out my claim to a Philistine, who first dismantled and then burned my log-house; then grubbed out my willow, and now has of my old estate a very productive, but not at all romantic, farm.

" 'Twas ever thus; in childhood's hour
I've seen my fondest hopes decay;
I never loved a tree or flower
But 'twas the first to fade away!
I never had a dear gazelle
To glad me with its soft, black eye,
But when it learned to know me well,
And love me, it was sure to die! " *

That was a good while ago, and I have witnessed the overthrow of many idols since that sad day.

Having been accorded a hearing by the patient and polite reader to a recital of my own private griefs, I have a mind to reward that long-suffering creature, and conclude, while I add to the sum of my villainies in the form of wholesale larcenies in the present chapter, by copying from a delightful American author† a graphic and amusing, and more or less

* MOORE.

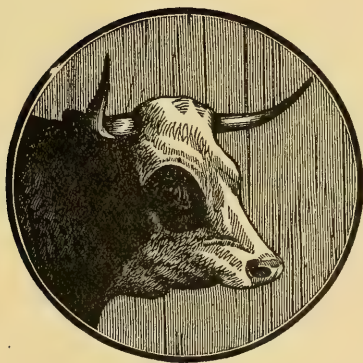
† HAWTHORNE: *Blithedale Romance*, Chap. VIII.

correct, description of the style of workmen who, earlier in the century, sought to carry on the celebrated Brook Farm:

"Arcadians though we were, our costume bore no resemblance to the be-ribboned doublets, silk breeches and stockings, and slippers fastened with artificial roses, that distinguish the pastoral people of poetry and the stage. In outward show, I humbly conceive, we looked rather like a band of beggars, or banditti, than either a company of honest laboring men, or a conclave of philosophers. Whatever might be our points of difference, we all of us seemed to have come to Blithedale with the one thrifty and laudable idea of wearing out our old clothes. Such garments as had an airing whenever we strode a-field! Coats with high collars, and with no collars, broad-skirted or swallow-tail, and with the waist at every point between the hip and the arm-pit; pantaloons of a dozen successive epochs, and greatly defaced at the knees by the humiliations of the wearer before his lady-love; in short, we were a living epitome of defunct fashions, and the very raggedest presentment of men who had seen better days. It was gentility in tatters. Often retaining a scholar-like or clerical air, you might have taken us for the denizens of Grub-street, intent on getting a comfortable livelihood by agricultural labor; or Coleridge's projected Pantisocracy in full experiment; or Candide and his motley associates at work in their cabbage-garden; or anything else that was miserably out at the elbows and most clumsily patched in the rear. We might have been sworn comrades to Falstaff's ragged regiment. Little skill as we boasted in other points of husbandry, every mother's son of us would have served admirably to stick up for a scarecrow. And the worst of the matter was, the first energetic movement essential to one downright stroke of real labor, was sure to put a finish to these poor habiliments. So we gradually flung them all aside, and took to honest homespun and linsey-woolsey. After a reasonable training, the

yeoman life throve well with us. Our faces took the sun-burn kindly; our chests gained in compass, and our shoulders in breadth and squareness; our great brown fists looked as if they had never been capable of kid gloves. The plow, the hoe, the scythe, the hay-fork grew familiar to our grasp. The oxen responded to our voices."

Is that not glorious! Ah, with what joy would the author of these *Recreations* rejoice if he might associate with a community of such farmers! Alas, that the Blithedale experiment came to so untimely an end! And there are no more Dr. Ripley's extant! It will be long ere the world shall see another Brook Farm.



MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XXI.



"Then welcome, rural solitude,
My great felicity!
Though some are pleased to call thee rude,
Thou art not so, but we."

PHILLIPS.

"The great man is he who does not lose his child's heart."

MENCIUS.

"By agriculture, the only honest way, wherein the man receives a real increase of the seed thrown into the ground, in a kind of continued miracle, wrought by the hand of God in his favor, as a reward for his innocent life and virtuous industry."

FRANKLIN.



CHAPTER XXI.

IF any reader of this discourse should be led to the conclusion that it was the purpose of the two preceding chapters to show that a man who was a miserable failure as a practical farmer, might nevertheless be an entertaining writer upon themes more or less nearly related to agriculture, to the end of making an advantage for the author, or the book, I hasten to correct the impression. I do not desire that my literary success shall depend upon my reputation for non-success as a tiller of the soil; for, like the immortal Greeley, at the time he composed his *Recollections of a Busy Life*, "I still mean to succeed,"—yea, even to coin money at farming!

I freely acknowledge that I might, with perfect propriety, at the present juncture, address my farm, my darling, old, scarred and stumpy Oakfields Farm! in the language that Goldsmith employed in apostrophizing his Muse:

"Thou source of all my joy, and all my woe,—
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so!"

But, thanks be to a merciful Providence, the end is not yet!

Like the lamented master of the stony, swampy Chappaqua, I have been hitherto "making rather than working a farm", and even now, while gazing about over my fields from which the stumps are yearly yielding as the plow advances, and my yet but partially reclaimed beaver-meadows, I am often reminded of Whittier's lines:

"The rudiments of empire here
Are plastic yet and warm,—
The chaos of a mighty world
Is rounding into form."*

But there is one difference between Chappaqua and Oak-fields, which is altogether in favor of the latter. The soil of my farm, for the most part, is as rich, fertile and promising as any that was ever manufactured from the raw material furnished by the original rocks, whether by the majestically-moving glacier, the action of flowing or dropping water or sweeping winds, through the subtle but powerful agency of frost, or by means of the milder, but no less certain, processes of vegetable growth;—and that soil was virgin when I began upon it: Mr. Greeley's estate, at its best, was but a cold and sterile piece of ground. Therefore, while in his crusade against the adverse forces of nature, failure was almost the inevitable result, in my own enterprise there was at least a "fighting chance" for some sort of success.

There is one matter in which some of my dearest friends have differed with me, and deemed that I erred in judgment. This is in regard to the choice I made of stark wild forest-land wherefrom to make my farm. I could show them good authority for my action in this matter, however, and have sometimes quoted to them from Xenophon, that glorious old Grecian farmer, who makes *Ischomachus* to say:

"I remember my father had an excellent rule which he advised me to follow, that if I bought any land I should by no means purchase that which had been already well im-

*If it so please you, in that last word substitute an a for the o.

proved, but should choose such as had never been tilled, either through neglect of the owner, or for want of capacity to do it; for he observed that if I were to purchase improved grounds I must pay a high price for them, and then I could not propose to advance them in value, and *must also lose the pleasure of improving them myself, or of seeing them thrive better by my endeavor.*"

The author of the *Anabasis* discovers his usual sound sense in the above paragraph, and his reasons appear to me particularly strong in those lines I have marked in Italics. I am aware that Cato took a contrary view, but am inclined, on the whole, to believe that, in this single instance, the sage decided without mature reflection. Modern sages have been known to make a similar mistake.

Of this much, at least, I feel assured: If in purchasing an unimproved farm, the price of which was merely nominal, I committed a grave error, there was still a graver which might have been committed. For instance, supposing that somebody owning such property at the time I made my purchase, had consented to sell me instead of the aboriginal Oakfields a well-developed farm, worth a great deal of money, exacting only the payment down I was then able to make, that person's mistake, I maintain, had been much greater and graver.

But I had other reasons besides the pecuniary one hinted at above, for not coveting a farm ready-made. I was from habit and instinct a pioneer-farmer, and loved all the processes of "clearing land". I did as a youth assist my father — also a pioneer-farmer, and one of the best and sturdiest of the class,— my father,—

"He was an elder in the land, and held
His first proprietary right, it seemed,
From Nature's self; for, in an earlier day,
He came with others, who of old had reached
Their neighbor hands across New England farms
Over the mountains to this western land —

A journey long, and slow, and perilous,
 With many hardships, and the homesick look
 Of wife and children backward; chose his farm,
 Buildd his house, and cleared, by hard degrees,
 Acres that years anon were meadows broad,
 Or wheat fields rocking in the summer heat! ”*

yea, he is one who learned the rudiments of his business when and where, as the Psalmist has it, “A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees”,†—him did I help in his herculean labor of making a farm *ab initio*—of carving out of the vast and grand old forests of beech and maple, oak and hemlock, space for broad and smiling fields. I have been with him in body and in spirit when

“His echoing axe the settler swung
 Amidst the sea-like solitude,—
 While rushing, thundering, down were flung
 The Titans of the wood!”

And I have been an interested spectator when such scenes as those described in the last half of the same spirited stanza have transpired, viz:

“Loud shrieked the eagle as he dashed
 From out his mossy nest,— which crashed
 With its supporting bough,
 And the first sunlight leaping, flashed
 On the wolf’s haunt below.”‡

Speaking of axes: I am, I dare say, to-day a better axeman than Gladstone, or than Greeley ever was; for, as to the latter, although he professed to love the instrument, he has confessed that he was but a poor chopper.§ But my love for the tool probably has never surpassed that of the great founder of the New York *Tribune*. He maintained with considerable enthusiasm that the axe was his “doctor and delight”, and expressed the wish that “all our boys would learn

*J. J. PIATT. †*Psalms*, LXX, 5.

‡ALFRED B. STREET. §*Recollections*, Page 303.

to love it".‡ I must concede, however, to make a further comparison, that from all that I have quoted, and all that I have left unquoted of the writings of the one, and from what I know of the other, that the writer of the *Recollections*, although a poorer chopper, appears to me to have been a much more industrious and enthusiastic woodsman than has been the writer of these *Recreations*, even in his palmiest days.

But I deprecate that any reader shall begin at this stage of our acquaintance to form unflattering opinions concerning the author's ability or disposition to wrestle with the problems which ever confront the pioneer-farmer. There are brave records in the recollections of relatives of the writer of this chapter, of deeds of prowess performed at an earlier day by the good right arm that wields this pen! Go question these friends, and be told of a huge, sound, and solid linden or basswood tree,—the largest of its species in a township which abounded in huge trees, and at that time contained little else but trees,—that the veracious writer hereof in his fourteenth year,—when boasting of but little more than one hundred pounds avoirdupois, and swinging an axe weighing precisely forty ounces, poised on a helve that measured thirty inches in length,—leveled with the earth! "I did it with my little hatchet!"

Was that not glory enough for one boy in a single day?

The stump of that tree—"a square and handsome one", my father admiringly pronounced it—when at length the trunk lay prostrate and we applied the tape, measured *just five feet across the top!*

Now don't cry out that the story is an improbable one, or that the feat as I have narrated it is impossible of performance. The "matchless deed" was actually

"Achieved,
Determined, dared, and done,"

in manner and form as herein related, as is still susceptible

**Rec. of a Busy Life.*

of proof by the testimony of eye-witnesses who remember all the details. The stump itself stood for many years

“To witness if I lie”,

and was seen of many. How well do I remember it — there in the sloping back-lot of my father's farm! It was always known by the family as “Frank's stump”. But time, which conquers all, has conquered that; it has at length entirely decayed away; the last vestige thereof is lost; its exact site even has become a mere matter of conjecture, and other monuments must be reared.

There is another class of persons — the butterflies of society, (you will find them everywhere, and in ever-increasing numbers in our young Republic), who will feel like indulging in ridicule at my expense, even now after I have so satisfactorily demonstrated that I am, or, at least, in former times have been, no “carpet knight” among pioneers; and perhaps more especially because I have deemed it worth while to defend myself, or even to write at all upon these trivial themes.

To be sure I anticipate that my book will be ignored, or much neglected, by the greater number of individuals of the last-named class. The very title of the work will be sufficient to keep them at bay. You will remember that the wise *Piscator* remarked: “It is an easy thing to scoff at any art or recreation; a little wit mixed with ill-nature will do it.”* The *Recreations of a Farmer*, forsooth! of a *farmer* of all men in the world!

Not all the great and good people the world has ever seen have despised the calling. “The first farmer was the first man,” as Emerson observes, and the same author further declares that “All historic nobility rests on the possession and use of land”.

For the benefit of such as are accustomed to sneer at the

*IZAAB WALTON: *The Complete Angler*.

husbandman and his vocation, I have concluded to extend the limits of this chapter beyond the stakes I had at first set, for the purpose of citing a few opinions. Divers of these proposed beneficiaries have doubtless heard of Thomas Jefferson, and regard him as having been a tolerably sensible man in his day and generation. At the risk of shocking some, I give certain of the great democrat's words, as follows:

"Let the farmer forevermore be honored in his calling, for they who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God."

These persons may also harbor a vague notion that Daniel Webster was great and wise; and yet it was the Marshfield statesman who uttered the declaration:

"Farmers are the founders of civilization."

Members of that class of persons who indulge in sneers, overt and covert, at farmers and farming, sometimes make profession to revere the "father of his country". Following are the very words of the immortal Washington:

"Agriculture is the most useful, the most healthful, and the most noble employment of man!"

Henry Ward Beecher, the great Brooklyn divine, adds his testimony to the above, administering, at the same time, a stinging rebuke to the scoffers for whose instruction and behoof we have prolonged this chapter, thus:

"He who would look with contempt upon the farmer's pursuit is not worthy the name of man."

General Xenophon, the celebrated Greek,—soldier, historian, and husbandman,—who flourished more than four hundred years before our savior's time, and whom I have before quoted in this chapter, held views upon the subject similar to those of the wise and good men of to-day, and among other fine sentences wrote the following:

"Agriculture, for an honorable and high-minded man, is the best of all occupations and arts by which men procure their means of living."

In the *Zend Avesta* we read :

"He is a holy man who constructs upon the earth a habitation in which he maintains fire, cattle, and his wife, his children, and flocks, and herds. He who makes the earth produce grain, who cultivates the fruits of the fields, he promotes the law of Ormazd as much as if he offered a hundred sacrifices."

Plutarch, in his life of Numa Pompilius, the second and best of the old Roman Kings, uses this significant language :

"For there is no employment that gives so keen and quick a relish for peace as husbandry and a country life, which leaves in men all that kind of courage which makes them ready to fight in defence of their own, while it destroys the license which breaks out into injustice and rapacity."

He says of Numa :

"He hoped that agriculture would be a sort of charm to captivate the affections of his people to peace; viewing it *rather as a moral than an economical profit*."

I may add, in passing, that the long, peaceful, and prosperous reign of this good king appears to be a justification of his theory!

Columella asserts that agriculture is next akin to philosophy.

"The great
Would mortify me in vain; for still
I am a willow of the wilderness,
Loving the wind that bent me. All my hurts
My garden spade can heal. A woodland walk,
A quest of river grapes, a mocking thrush,
A wild-rose, or rock-loving columbine
Salve my worst wounds."*

Bacon denominates gardening "the purest of human pleasures".

"Oh, friendly to the best pursuits of life,
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,
Domestic life in rural pleasures past."†

*EMERSON: *Musketaquid*.

†COWPER.

The love of Tibullus, Cicero, Pliny, Virgil, Cato, Propertius, Catullus, among the ancients, for the rural life and for the husbandman's pursuit is known to every reader of history.

“Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note,
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

“Who doth ambition shun
And loves to lie i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.”*

I will conclude this chapter with a quotation from Gray's fine poem :

“Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault
If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where, through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

“Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,—
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool, sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.”

*SHAKESPEARE



MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XXII.



"I built my soul a lordly pleasure house
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell;
I said, 'O soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well.'

"And 'while the world runs round and round,' I said,
'Reign thou apart, a quiet King,
Still, as while Saturn whirls, his steadfast shade
Sleeps on his luminous ring.'

"To which my soul made answer readily:
'Trust me in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion, that is built for me,
So royal, rich and wide.'"

TENNYSON.

"So the dreams depart,
So the fading phantoms flee;
And the sharp reality
Now must act its part."

WESTWOOD: *Beads of a Rosary.*

"That there's a mortgage, I've been told,
About it wound so neatly,
That ere this new moon shall be old
'Twill be swept off completely."

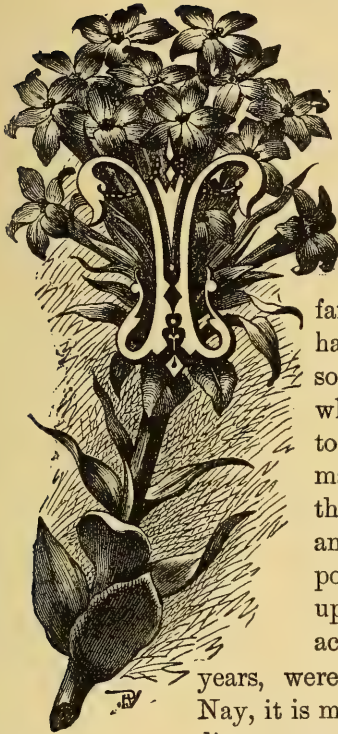
CATULLUS.

"Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire."

MILTON: *Paradise Lost.*

"The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is a
servant to the lender."

Prov., XXII, 7.



CHAPTER XXII.

HE sagacious reader already will have observed that the source of much of the objection to my removal to the farm, on the part of my kinsmen, had been an apprehension of something in my disposition which would disincline me either to *hold* or *drive* in the various manual operations requisite to the successful working of a farm; and it is not unreasonable to suppose that their fears, grounded upon their knowledge of my character gained during my early years, were not altogether unwarranted. Nay, it is more than probable that had the direct question been put to me even at the date of my greatest enthusiasm for rustic retirement, and I unable to find a way of evading the same, I should have replied somewhat in the language used by Dr. Faust, when Mephistopheles pointed out to him *one* way of renewing his youth:

"I am not used to that, I cannot stoop to try it,
To take the spade in hand and ply it:
The narrow being suits me not at all."*

*GOETHE: *Faust*.

I had long been impressed with the belief that there was somewhere for me a middle course between the life I had been leading,—which was telling on my health, and which I felt was, to say the least, not the most favorable one in the world for the development of the intellectual man, and which did not afford such leisure for literary work as I coveted,—and the life of the ordinary farmer.

It may appear somewhat paradoxical that opportunity for study and composition is not afforded by the calling of the journalist, whose work is largely reading and writing; but it is nevertheless true. Perusing the daily papers and fabricating news paragraphs, with an occasional “leader” of hurried birth and doubtful finish, tends rather to kill than to foster both the habit of, and the taste for, what I should denominate true literary work.

It was a sort of task-work which I had to perform, and it grew more distasteful as it became more a matter of mechanical habit. Again, by the labor of writing, proof-reading, etc., exercises which I was long past receiving any benefit from in an intellectual way, and on account of the increasing discomfort I felt in the prolonged sessions at the “editor’s table”, which this work necessitated, I was, from physical causes alone, becoming incapacitated to accomplish any large amount of business in my study.

I had found by experimentation that whenever it became possible for me to dismiss all care from my mind, and to indulge myself in a stroll of a couple of hours’ duration over the farm, varying such recreation, perhaps, by occasional pauses to assist a little in the work there on-going, I was benefited, both physically and mentally, more than I could have convinced myself would be possible by any *a priori* reasoning. I was more alarmed concerning my health than anybody knew. I was aware of the cause of that deep chest pain, however, and I thought I knew what would relieve and, perhaps, permanently remove it.

It had appeared to me possible that I might so manage matters as to reside upon my farm and oversee all the work there, with a trusty "General" to carry out the plans in the field which should be elaborated in the cabinet, and with laborers sufficient to do the work, so that the amount of time spent by me in out-of-door employment might be regulated by my own desires, and yet all be done with measurable economy.

There are a few delicate matters which I have been uneasily carrying along a great while, waiting for a favorable opportunity to divulge them. Could I have been sure that you would have listened in a kindly and sympathetic manner, dearest reader, I should have ventured to speak out long ago. I do so dread ridicule, even though it be good-humored, and I have a perfect horror of a sneer! To be sure this weakness (for as a weakness I can but regard it) would scarcely prevent my taking a bold stand upon what I considered the right side of a great moral question, or any matter of general moment; but this affair is one strictly private and personal to myself. I do not care to make a confidant of a person who is simply kind and well-disposed in a general way; I desire one who feels a particular friendliness for me; who will be tender of my feelings; who will not laugh at me even if what he hears appears wild or visionary; who, in one word, will be sympathetic. I think I can trust you now, reader; then listen.

I have long entertained the sentiment that what should be about the pleasantest life in the world is that of the landed country-gentleman of England. Living a little remote from town, he is yet enabled to enjoy all its best advantages, while he avoids its discomforts and inconveniences. He has a fixed home, which it is his to enrich and adorn,—a permanent home, connected in the idea with the soil of his country. He is part owner of the broad-bosomed earth, which Hesiod speaks of as "the everlasting seat of all that is",—the beautiful, the kindly earth,—the "tender mother of us

all," as Pliny after Plato has it,—and *more* his mother than another's. His is a stable home, fit to be ever the center of his plans, his ambitions, his hopes, his life! His broad acres, of which he knows intimately every foot, are a solid foundation, which neither fire, nor flood, nor whirlwind, can sweep from beneath his feet. Through his possessions he becomes, in a sense, himself secure, solid, permanent! Raised above the necessity of daily drudgery in the field, he has leisure for the cultivation of his mind, for philosophy, for composition (if he be bent that way), for such society as he chooses to indulge in — and he is almost the only man in the realm to whom it is left to exercise a choice in this matter. He is truly the independent gentleman, the "solid citizen", the wise conservative, the ballast of the ship of state! Were I a citizen of "Merrie England" I would say: Let me be an independent, land-owning, country-gentleman, and I care not who bears the titles.

You have, of course, read Irving's *Bracebridge Hall*. I perused it when a boy, and it has been an influence in my life.*

*"I am ashamed and humbled," writes COLERIDGE, in a note to the *Biographia Literaria*, on an occasion when he had found grazing in the luxuriant and *well-watered* pasturage of certain picturesque sentences he had therein written, a herd of what he termed "hydrostatic bulls". I am saddened and humbled; for I had verily believed that the above description of an English country-gentleman's happy lot, was to a large extent original with myself. I had not perused the *Bracebridge Hall* for years and years; but having referred thereto in the text, I bethought me just to scan it over again to see what it *does* say. Alas, what did I find! I have copied a sentence or two from one of IRVING's chapters; read:

"Indeed," says IRVING, "I do not know a more enviable condition of life than that of an English gentleman of sound judgment and good feeling, who passes the greater part of his time in an hereditary estate in the country. * * * He is enabled to command all the intelligence and novelties of the capital, while he is removed from its hurry and distractions. He has ample means of occupation and amusement within his own domains. He may diversify his time by rural oc-

The poet Crabbe, if I may be indulged in the use of a little verse, describes two varieties of country-gentlemen, as they existed in his day :

“Two are the species of the genus known:
 One who is rich in his profession grown,
 Who yearly finds his ample stores increase,
 From fortune's favors and a favoring lease;
 Who rides his hunter, who his house adorns,
 Who drinks his wine and his disbursement scorns;
 Who freely lives, and loves to show he can;—
 This is the farmer made a gentleman!
 “ * The second from the world is sent,
 Tired of its strife, or with its wealth content;
 In books and men beyond the former read,
 To farming solely by a passion led,
 Or by a fashion; curious in his land,
 Now planning much, now changing what he planned;
 Pleased by each trial, not by failures vexed,
 And ever certain to succeed the next;
 Quick to resolve and easy to persuade;—
 This is a gentleman a farmer made!
Gwin was of these; he from the world withdrew
 Early in life, his reasons known to few;
 Some disappointment said, some pure good sense,
 The love of land, the press of indolence.”*

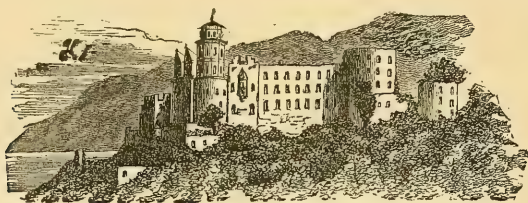
I have been yearning to found a *home* that should be strong, substantial, and permanent as the good earth, its foundation,—a hall, if you please, generous enough as to size and room, with brick, and oak, and iron, and stone for

cupations, rural sports, and by the delight of friendly society within the walls of his own hospitable halls.” And still other things there are in this delightful volume which will remind you of my own poor lines.

What a tantalizing thing is this memory, which is at times so feeble that I almost lose the power of promptly pronouncing my own name, and at others is so retentive that it enables me to steal, with no felonious intent, whole sentences, nay, paragraphs! But the text shall stand as written.

*CRABBE'S *Tales*.

materials: a hall;—and having chosen for site an eminence (the site has already been selected) I would dig down deep to ledge of solid, everlasting earth or rock, whereon to lay the underpinning. My arched doorways and windows with



oaken casements should be broad and ample, a sign of hospitality, and to let in freely the glorious sunlight. One tower, at least, I would have lift its proud head to enlarge my horizon, to afford me a coign of vantage to overlook my own domains, and to view the sweet pictures of my neighbors' farmsteads, and from my "loop-holes of retreat" to catch a glimpse of the life and motion of railways, highways, and the distant town!

To this, my hall, surrounded by its tree- and shrub-besprinkled grounds, beautified at little pecuniary expense, perhaps, but at large cost of taste and care, would I assemble my friends,—book-lovers, peace-lovers, and earth-lovers like myself,—and here would we found the capital of the freest intellectual democracy!

"But these are dreams!"*

* * * *

There are some things which are not dreams!

* * * *

Reader, do you know what a mortgage is?

Be not surprised at the question; I am seeking at this late day to ascertain the true meaning of certain terms in quite common use, having been content for a period of time exceeding a moiety of the allotted life of man, (like you, my

*GREELEY.

dear sir; or, you, dear madam,—barring the fact, of course, that *you* are not so old by half, at least!) to be put off with merely superficial or half-meanings. Therefore, with this understanding, I ask again, do you know all that is comprehended in that term, mortgage?

When the question was propounded to me (if it so happened that it *was*) by the law-professor who “quizzed” me during my course at the university, I gave him, I presume, as nearly as I could recollect it, the substance of the definition found in *Bouvier*, and the good old gentleman was probably satisfied with the answer, although it is undeniable that he was (and is) a man of intelligence and fine feeling, and was even then bald, gray and wrinkled. He knew then *in his heart* that the definition I had given was to the last degree imperfect, and yet he let it pass. He undoubtedly believed that for a man so young and inexperienced as I then was, I had acquitted myself with tolerable credit in defining the word as perfectly as had the maker of the dictionary, and he must have been aware (for, as intimated above, he is a man accustomed to look a little beneath the surface of things) that for an accurate account of the *meaning* of the word I should have been obliged to go outside of the text-books, outside of all the dictionaries, outside of the law-library even, yea, outside of the great library of the university itself.

But I will undertake to say that had I turned, upon the succeeding day, and put the question to the venerable judge himself, *his* definition of the term would not have differed in any material particular from that I had given. Even had a faculty meeting of the law department been called for the express purpose of fixing upon a comprehensive definition of the thing in question, and had the professors there convened deliberated long and well upon the subject, the result of their labors would have been nothing new,—the definition they had agreed upon—a sickly abortion still!

After I had entered upon the practice of the law it frequently became my duty to draw up a mortgage for my clients. This I was in the habit of doing with perfect coolness and unconcern, for as yet, like *Frankenstein* when as a student he fabricated the gigantic being which was to be the occasion of so much misery in the world, I did not realize the true nature of the thing I made, and all the while I thought the dictionary-makers had been wise in their day and generation, and hence that their definition was the correct one. Alas! there are very many words defined in the lexicons of whose *real meanings* we never dream until they have been taught us by experience!

Dearest reader, if you will be patient with me I will attempt here and now to give a more full and complete definition of a mortgage than can be found in any book. I have bespoken your patience because the task is a long one, and a peculiarity of feeling which occasionally affects me when my mind dwells upon this subject may cause me to falter at times and deviate from the direct way. I have the right to speak as I do upon this theme: I know the nature of the thrice-accursed thing to which men have given that name. *I have learned it by bitter experience!*

For the past decade an ominous shadow has hovered over my pathway. It is a peculiar, cloud-like shadow, and possesses the power of assuming protean shapes.

Sometimes I have been sitting chatting at my own fire-side, and the little company has been building, perhaps, some gay castle in the air, which Hope is promising us shall be realized in the near future. A gloom gradually fills the room, unperceived by any but me. *'Tis the shadow!* and forthwith my castle collapses.

Perchance a visit has been planned, a Christmas re-union, it may be, of relatives and friends. The enterprise is cheerily discussed for days, and no thought of a possible failure entertained; — that gloomy shade appears, and all the

pleasure planned which depends upon my participation, fails!

An ambitious project is entertained,—a move is contemplated which promises pleasant things,—perhaps worthy achievements in politics, in business, in literature. Like a miasmatic fog that shadow falls over it all, and strength and ambition are departed!

Now it is a gloomy spirit that visits me in my study, bending above me when I am seated, book in hand, in my chair; or when I write, leaning towards me from the opposite side of my table, with a Mephistophelean leer in its cold, dead eyes!

“Loathed Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born,
In Stygian caves forlorn,
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy.”*

Now, where friends have met together for pleasant conversation and pastime, forgetting myself for the moment, I am actually enjoying the cheerful scene, when, happening to cast my eyes upward, over the shoulder of a companion, I see the shadowy outlines of a death's head; a skeleton arm is extended; a long, bony finger is pointed — *I know where*, and shudderingly withdraw!

Returning home after a brief absence, with glad feelings in my heart that I am soon to see the face of the one I love more than all earthly beings beside, the vanishing visage of a grinning harpy blisters my vision. I recognize him; he is an old acquaintance, and he had fulfilled his mission with me ere he went; I find a cold, immovable stone in my bosom!

“Thou hast been called, oh, sleep! the friend of woe;
But 'tis the happy who have called thee so!”†

I have been awakened at the dead hour of night, an agony in my breast, and have given utterance to deep groans which

*MILTON.

†SOUTHEY: *Curse of Kehama*.

the exercise of my utmost will was not sufficient to suppress. Roused by the start and noise, the gentle being at my side has questioned me, and I have replied, "It is nothing!" Nothing! It was the evil one himself! but he had only been paying me one of his accustomed visits, and with his red-hot pincers playfully nipping my naked heart!

I will tell you what a mortgage is.

It is the grinning skeleton in the closet in many a home that were otherwise most happy.

It is an incubus, perpetually sitting upon your spirit!

"Her skin as white as leprosy,
The night-mare Life-in-Death is she
Who thickens man's blood with cold."*

It is a paper bond which binds down your proud soul,—firmer and more galling is it than are links of brass or hooks of steel to the body!

It is a whip of scorpions in a demon hand for your daily torture!

It is an asp with sting thrust into your brain, whose venom, not usually fatal, is only maddening, or, at other times, benumbing!

It is a cold, slimy snake that, in those hours which you should give to rest and repose, crawls into your arm-chair, or your couch, and insinuating its horrid head into your shrinking bosom, throws his coils about you and tightens them!

It is a vampire which is battenning upon your life-blood from day to day!

It is the Promethean vulture, eating your heart which is ever renewed that the agony may be perpetual!

It is an octopus which has seized and wrapped you with crushing force in his tentacles, and is holding you helpless to devour you at his leisure!

*COLERIDGE: *The Ancient Mariner*.

It is the foul fiend loosed from the pit, cold, cruel, merciless, sneering! endowed with power to inflict upon you all the torments of hell before the time!*

*NOTE.—It may be objected that I have included in my definition of a *mortgage* much that would be true if given as a definition of *debt in general*; or, that what is said applies to the debt rather than to its accidental accompaniment, the security,—the mortgage. In reply to this I would say that in numerous instances the mortgage can by no means be called an *accidental accompaniment* of the debt, as the debt would never have had an existence but for the mortgage, and, in a certain sense, may be said to have been called into being *for the sake* of the mortgage. That the mortgage is the *cause* and *occasion* of the debt, in very many cases,—that is to say, that the debt would in such instances never have existed at all but for the opportunity given by the *system of taking mortgage securities*,—may be easily verified by an appeal to the incidents of our every-day life. I subjoin a few of the latter which have come under my personal observation.

Many there are similar to this: A man, who owns a small homestead, deliberately goes into debt for a sum of money which he could well and would have done without, but for the *ease* with which it could be had,—he was, perhaps, being occasionally importuned by a loan agent to *take some money*,—and to secure the loan has pledged his farm in a mortgage which is destined to plague him for years, and to wrest his farm from him in the end. In such case the debt never could have existed but for the mortgage. The money, which had seemed to come easily, went easily, and perhaps of itself, and at the time, was more a damage than a benefit to the borrower.

Take another instance (and I know of several such): A well-to-do farmer covets an adjoining lot. Can he secure it? O, yes; it is but to take a deed and then for the amount of the purchase-price give a mortgage covering both the land purchased and the farm of the purchaser. Can time be had to make the payment? Certainly; as much of it as the buyer wants. In course of years, after his hair has grown gray and his form bowed by toil in the service of him who holds the mortgage and collects the annual or semi-annual interest thereon, there comes a bad season or two and — the accursed mortgage has turned the farmer off his farm — out of his home!

A third variety: A young man, ambitious to own a home, contracts with a wealthier acquaintance for a piece of land. He makes a small payment in hand, and gives a mortgage to secure the payment of the balance at the end of some two or three years, perhaps. He then sets to work with all his energy to improve his little farm. He erects a

house, perhaps, fences, etc. The year rolls round; the interest falls due. Having expended a large share of his time in labor upon his improvements, the youth lacks the means to make the payment. He visits the mortgagee about the matter. Oh, it is of no consequence; let it run awhile. The land, with these improvements upon it, is good security anyhow for a much larger sum than the debt. This is repeated at the end of the second year. But now the youth, having a fair home of *his own*, desires a companion to share it. He visits his old friend and creditor and consults him about the matter. If this step is taken that interest will have to be neglected another year. Well, there is quite an accumulation now: would it not be best to have a *new mortgage* made of just the amount of the principal and accrued interest? or, as the youth is about to begin housekeeping and needs some clothes and will need furniture, etc., why not make the loan a trifle larger, take more time if necessary, and pay the whole at one date? The future looks promising to the young man; his fields are growing broader; he feels that he *really needs* the money (although he hadn't thought of getting it thus before); to have it he has only to say the word! Yes, he'll take it! The amount of the old mortgage is figured up; the young debtor is saddened to perceive how large it is; but he has now so set his mind upon the additional sum that he must have it, and it goes in. With a choking sensation and a ringing sound in his ears, he puts his pen to paper, grasps the crisp bills representing the new loan, and hurries away. That mortgage proves to be a diabolical thing! "It has the primal, eldest curse upon it!" Like *Macbeth*, it "murders sleep"; it goes even further; it murders the peace of that young husband; preying upon his mind, it destroys his health, and so murders by inches the man himself! Too proud, perhaps, and too fond to tell his young wife of his care, it pursues him through years of his life like the *Nemesis*! Sometimes his debt increases, seldom does it diminish; but in time the mortgage has devoured both the farm and the man!

I have known a man to mortgage his little home to secure the means to make a journey, or a visit; and the mortgagee shortly became the owner of the property.

I have known a man to mortgage his homestead to procure the means of purchasing improved stock at extravagant prices, and only to be had for cash, and afterwards surrender up that farm to the mortgagee.

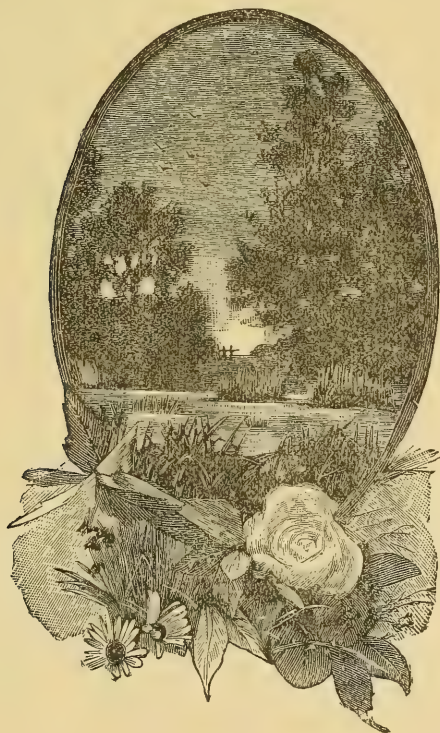
I have seen a man give a mortgage to raise money wherewith to make improvements upon the home he pledged; and he did not live to see that mortgage discharged, although he struggled therewith through many dubious years.

I have known a man who mortgaged his little homestead to buy a team of horses of the mortgagee, paying, as is usually the case in these

instances, a very high price for his chattels. He wore the horses out on the farm in making improvements; the mortgage remained unpaid, and the man who had parted with the team took the land—and of course the improvements.

All over our land this tragedy, with innumerable variations, is being enacted; but so quietly does the terrible play proceed that to the careless observer naught of it appears.

There are no exemptions in a foreclosing mortgage. This is the true *Shylock* that, once the forfeiture occurs, takes unrelentingly the last ounce of the pound of flesh, as "it is nominated in the bond", and is undeterred by the consideration that the blood and life of a christian-man must follow—for the law permits it! A mortgage is everything it is painted in the text, and is enabled to accomplish its diabolical work by the wonderful power of *accumulating interest*!



MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XXIII.



"Let us first of all, then, have a class of laws which shall be called the laws of husbandmen. And let the first of these be the laws of Zeus, the god of boundaries. Let no one shift the boundary line either of a fellow-citizen who is a neighbor, or, if he dwells at the extremity of the land, of any stranger who is contiguous to him, considering that this is truly to move the immovable."

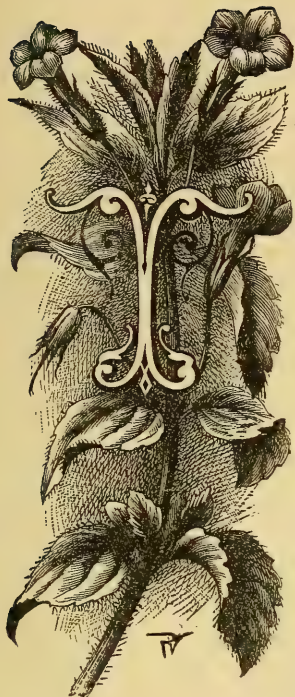
PLATO: *Laws*, IV, 357.

"And to the god Terminus, or Boundary, they offer to this day both public and private sacrifices upon the borders and stone-marks of their lands; living victims now, though anciently those sacrifices were solemnized without blood; for Numa reasoned that the god of boundaries, who watched over peace, should have no concern with blood."

PLUTARCH: *Life of Numa Pompilius*.

"Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark. And all the people shall say amen!"

Deut., XXVII, 17.



CHAPTER XXIII.

OPOGRAPHICAL pursuits," observes the learned Southey, in that most eccentric of all curious books, *The Doctor, &c.*, "tend to preserve and promote the civilization of which they are a consequence and a proof."

Being about to inflict upon the reader of this work some results of my own topographical studies at Oakfields, I gladly avail myself of so high an authority as a justification. Southey continues:

"Whatever strengthens our local attachment is favorable both to individual and national character.

Our home — our birthplace — our native land! — think for awhile what the virtues are which arise out of the feeling connected with these words; and if thou hast any intellectual eyes thou wilt then perceive the connection between topography and patriotism."

For the choice of so plain a subject as that I treat of in this chapter, I am sustained, also, by the countenance of that eminently respectable writer of verse and poetical prose, Thoreau, who somewhere remarks: "I omit the unusual,—the hurricanes and earthquakes, and describe the common. This has the greatest charm, and is the true theme of poetry."

This poet-naturalist in another place repeats: "Give me simple, cheap, and homely themes."

We may add to the above the names of Irving, Wordsworth, Crabbe, and various other elegant writers, as those of men who believed in the doctrine expounded by Thoreau, and taught the same by precept and example. It will be perceived, then, that my subject is one fit to employ the noblest pen, and my treatment thereof shall be—well, such as I shall be able to give it.

In the first place, mindful of the spirit of the laws quoted as mottoes for this chapter, I will proceed to attend to the question of boundaries, only pausing to state, for the better understanding of what follows, that the farm lies upon the south line of its township, in a very new district, and even at the date of this writing is almost entirely surrounded by forests. The latter for the most part, however, are dead, and have been decimated by fire and storm so as to present an unpoetic, nay, a ragged and forlorn appearance. Only here and there among the tall timber are seen oases of green—oak, ash, elm, and maple trees—but even where the fire has destroyed the life of the larger growth, and only the stark and stiff trunks of the pines remain to mark the ruin, a thrifty undergrowth of poplar, birch, and alder bushes may usually be discovered.

Our townships, when full and exact, are divided into thirty-six sections of land, each of the latter being one mile square, and containing six hundred and forty acres. These sections the surveyor begins numbering at the north-eastern, and counts toward the northwestern corner, one, two, &c., to six, and then dropping to the tier south, numbers back; and so continues alternately until the last section, which is numbered thirty-six, is reached. This section lies in the south-eastern corner of the township. The last, or southern row of sections (which count from the western side of the township toward the eastern), are numbered thirty-one, -two, etc., to thirty-six. Sections are sub-divided into lots, described

as eighty-acre lots, forty-acre lots, etc., according to extent. Oakfields, which at present comprises four hundred and eighty acres of land, lies mostly upon section thirty-three of its township. The latter is technically written down, T. 15, N. of R. 2 E.

That portion of the farm upon thirty-three is formed of the entire western half of the section—four eighty-acre lots—and the north half of the south-east quarter of the section, a single eighty-acre lot, and called the “east eighty” of the farm. In addition to these descriptions there is another eighty-acre lot lying just north of the west half of section thirty-three, on section number twenty-eight of the same township. This lot is termed in surveyors’ parlance the south half of the south-west quarter of its section. By this it will appear that the western segment of the farm is a great parallelogram, one and a quarter miles in length from north to south, and one-half mile in width, and consists of five eighty-acre lots in a tier; while the eastern wing (a single eighty-acre lot) is a parallelogram one-half mile long from east to west, and one-fourth of a mile in width. The state road, extending north and south and bisecting the township, runs along the eastern extremity of this last-described lot, and another highway (known here as the west road) running parallel to the last, and one mile further west, follows the western side of the farm its entire length, viz.: one mile and a quarter. Both these highways, coming from the wilds to the northward, lead to the county-seat (my “Dreamthorp”) direct. By the western road it is some two and one-half miles from the nearest corner of the farm to the “corporation line”; and a trifle above three and one-half miles from the farm-house to the court-house. By the state road it is a trifle over two and three-fourths miles from the entrance to the farm to the village line, and from the farm-house to the court-house some four and one-half miles.

The farm is longest from north to south, viz.: one mile and one-quarter; at its widest part it extends from highway

to highway, a distance of one mile. In circumference my territory measures just four and one-half miles.

The farm buildings stand a trifle (about fifteen rods) eastward from the geographical center of the western half of section thirty-three. The house is upon the northern side of the northern half of the south-west quarter, and the barn is upon the extreme southern edge of the southern half of the north-west quarter of the section aforesaid. Hence the surveyor's quarter-line, bisecting the section from east to west, passes between the buildings, and in front of either, as they face each other.

By tracing out the descriptions as above given and making computation, the reader will learn that the group of farm buildings stands aloof from both highways: distant from that on the west some ninety-five, and from that on the east about two hundred and twenty-five perches. It will also appear that it is a half mile from the group to the southern line of the farm, and three-fourths of a mile to the northern.

Isolated thus from the public highway, it has become necessary to provide private ways to communicate with the outside world, and these have been projected. One is destined when completed, to bisect the "east eighty" from east to west, and from the point where it cuts the north and south quarter line of the section, to continue due west about sixty-five perches, where it will make a grand curve (describing an arc of ninety degrees), and come around upon a line with the drive that passes upon the eastern side of the farm-house and leads to the barn. This way, or lane, which it is destined to be, is not fully surveyed as yet, and is one of the many improvements planned to be made in the future. The other way, not yet marked out, is one leading south-westerly from the house to the ridge, and thence westward to the highway in a course parallel to, and a few yards south of, the quarter-line.

The form of the farm may appear a trifle odd and inconvenient to some, who, perchance, would like to inquire why I did not purchase a more compact body of land, and not

have a small segment extending, peninsular-like, out into space, as does the so-called east eighty. The advantage given is the communication with another road. I like road fronts upon a sizeable farm; I have two now, and anticipate the opening of another highway anon which will bound my southern border upon the township line. However, I will assure my critical reader that I would still make the shape of my temporal kingdom to their notion, square and handsome, only for one little difficulty: I lack the means to purchase the requisite territory to fill the corners!

To describe the surface, I may state, in general terms, that the farm consists of a plain, diversified by low ridges. Entering at the eastern gate, we are upon a flat, with a ridge, some twelve or fifteen feet in height, a few rods to the right. Proceeding westward, upon the private road heretofore described, a distance of some fifty yards, we rise to the top of the ridge, which curves to meet us here, and which, already diminished in height, grows "finer by degrees and beautifully less" as we travel toward the setting sun, but finally angles so as to leave us to the right, and is never quite lost until it has traversed the length of the lot and joined the base of a higher ridge — which adorns the southern portion of the farm — near the north-eastern corner of the southern lot.

This higher ridge, which is distinguished from all others on the place by being referred to invariably as "the ridge", while others are known as "the east ridge", "the west ridge," etc., has its greatest elevation where it enters my domains from neighbor Hitchcock's realms on the east. It runs thence angling toward the northwest, and makes its exit over my western limits under the equatorial line cutting the section into northern and southern halves. It fails to "hold its bigness", however, and goes out "at the little end of the horn", but swells again, directly it has crossed the line, into a mound of some prominence, which has received the name of Mt. Tom. The ridge we have been describing is of the

character sometimes designated as a "hog's back". It forms the line of demarcation between the light, sandy soils upon the south side and the rich clay-loam, sand-loam, and alluvion of the beaver-meadows and creek flats of the northern and eastern portions of the farm. It shades off upon its southerly side into a wide expanse of light-soiled country, where formerly stood a pine forest, skirted by tamarack swamps which are rapidly being drained and dried. The descent to the flats upon the northerly side is much more abrupt.

There is another sandy ridge worthy of note, which runs along upon the west, following the line of the road in a loose sort of way, advancing and receding, and serrated with depressions caused by little water-courses. Only the edge of this ridge is mine. Here a spur and there another penetrate toward the interior of my dominions. One of these, about half way up from the south, probably the most considerable of any in points of length and altitude, has received the name of Bunker Hill. Pilot Knob, another fine spur, stands upon the northern lot (Hyperborea) and is the site of *The Fort*, where General Allen and Mrs. A. II. now reside, and of which more, perhaps, hereafter.*

The Beaver-Meadow *par excellence* lies along near the base of this western ridge. This is an elongated open space of low and most fertile ground, and constitutes the water-course through which is drained a large area lying to the north and east. Its course is approximately a meridian. Across this beaver-meadow from the ridge lies the greenwood,—as truly my joy and pride, doubtless, as Greeley's woods were his! The meadow and forest coquette with each other, crowding

**The Fort* (Ticonderoga, in honor of General E. Allen, the architect, builder, and occupant) is a snug and substantial block-house, and was erected in the summer of 1885. The artist, in the corner-piece on *ante* page 40, has given a measureably correct view (from the south) of the Fort and surrounding scenery. This post guards our northwestern frontier.

THE BEAVER-MEADOW PAR EXCELLENCE.



and yielding, receding and advancing, alternately, and sometimes the meadow, but never quite the woods, is lost entirely. It is near the northern line of the southern section where the forest is densest and the meadow is missing; and here there is truly a fine piece of live woods! It is the thickest and noblest portion of that narrow, but continuous covert, three-fourths of a mile in length (and all belonging to Oakfields), which loosely parallels and lies in plain view from both highways. At its best it is nearly one-half a mile in depth. This tract is the "real woods" of Beecher, "that man never planted nor pruned,"—the genuine article, —the "straight goods". That I prize this forest very highly, "I shall neither attempt to palliate nor deny".

"Here are old trees, tall oaks and gnarled pines
That stream with gray-green mosses; here the ground
Was never touched by spade, and flowers spring up unsown
And die ungathered. It is sweet
To linger here among the flitting birds
And leaping squirrels, and winds that shake
The leaves."*

"Woods have in all ages," says Howitt, "vividly impressed the human mind; they possess a majesty and sublimity which strike and charm the eye. They soothe the spirit by their grateful seclusion, and delight it by glimpses of their wild inhabitants, by their novel cries, and beautiful phenomena peculiar to themselves."†

And, to descend from generals to particulars, here in my own noble woods and sweet wild meadows, where, in winter, old *Boreas* plays the grand organ of Nature's cathedral, in the pleasant summer-time doth *Zephyrus* make delightful music upon his harp, million-stringed with leaves and grass-blades, and here, at this mild season, excepting the gentle god, are "crickets and grasshoppers the only players upon instruments."‡

*BRYANT.

†*Book of the Seasons.*

‡H. W. BEECHER.

The time is rapidly approaching, so sadly have our wildernesses been devastated by the frequent fires, when a green forest tree upon this portion of the footstool will be a rarity, and the wisdom of that pioneer who has preserved such as it has been within his power to save, will be acknowledged and applauded! I tell you, fellow farmers, we are committing crimes in our wilful wholesale destruction of our noblest forests! We shall be punished for our sins of this character, too, by and by; but it is a matter to deplore that many must suffer with us who are innocent of the great transgression,—for it takes long to grow forests to fill the places of those our reckless vandalism has annihilated!

The forest described, with one or two other little skirts—one in particular lying on the south side of the “east eighty”—I regard as the peculiar glory of my estate.

What money would I accept and consent to their removal? Away, wretch! you insult me!



MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XXIV.

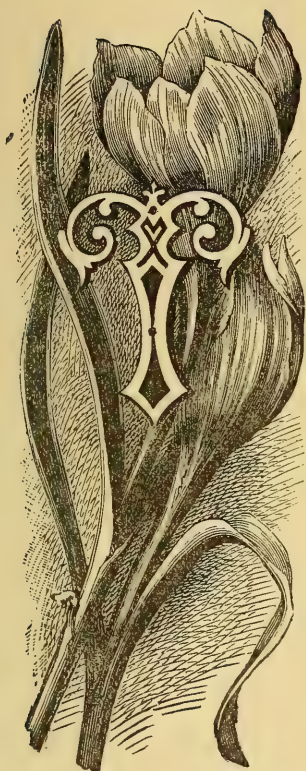
~~~~~  
"Still harping."

SHAKESPEARE: *Hamlet*.

"Ye who love the haunts of Nature,  
Love the sunlight of the meadow,  
Love the shadows of the forest,  
Love the wind among the branches,—  
Listen to these wild traditions."

LONGFELLOW: *Hiawatha*.





## CHAPTER XXIV.

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HOSE who read the last chapter and enjoyed it, did well. Those who read it without enjoyment, fared ill. Whoso read it and means to read on, is brave if not wise. Who read and cried "woe!" I warn him to skip this; for if he have heard of the "worse and more of it" and deem it, like Rabelais' giants, a fiction, he will soon be undeceived. Fully alive to the fact recognized by Whittier that

"Pipes by lips Arcadian blown  
Are simply tin-horns at our own";

may, that

"What sounds so sweet by Doon or Ayr"

may even

"Sound simply silly hereabout,"

still I madly push on.

"If I linger proudly among my trees," observes Greeley in his *Recollections*, "consider that here most of my farm work has been done, and here my profit has been realized in the shape of health and vigor. When I am asked the usual question, 'How has your farming paid?' I can truthfully answer that my part of it has paid splendidly, being all



income and no outgo,—and who can show a better balance-sheet than that?"

"Poor Greeley," you exclaim, "and that was about the sum of his profits to the end!"

But you are wrong. I can tell you of another class of profits — of other gains — he realized besides those he speaks of, and besides those *you* would seek, oh, you prosaic monster! who subscribe only to the sordid creed of Hudibras:

"What is worth in anything  
But so much money as 'twill bring!"

Beecher recognized the reality and the great value of the intellectual and moral harvests which every enthusiast in like case reaps,—not annually, but diurnally, hourly, momentarily, if he dwells upon the subject,—and we have quoted the Plymouth pastor elsewhere as asserting that "Large crops are the result [of such farming as his own, mine, Greeley's, Thoreau's, and that of the Brook-farmers], of great delight, and fancies more than the brain can hold!"

"The true harvest of my daily life," Thoreau somewhere says, "is somewhat as intangible and indescribable as the tints of morning and evening. It is a little star-dust caught, a segment of the rainbow which I have clutched."

Then, again, there was Christopher North,—bless his hearty, kindly, poetical, jolly, old soul! he was the boy for *such* harvests! Hear how, in his pleasant *Recreations*, he rhapsodizes concerning the moor:

"Oh, \* \* the moor! Hundreds, thousands loved it, as well as we did; for though it grew no grain, many a glorious crop it bore — shadows like ghosts — the giants stalked — the dwarfs crept! Sunbeams that nestled with the shadows!" And so he goes on for pages.

Then if *I* linger proudly among *my* trees — my groves — my "real woods"—henceforward in this the last and most original of all books, "good friends, sweet friends," you surely cannot find it in your hearts to censure me,—can you now? Reflect:

“Steeped in the fragrant breath of leaves,  
 My heart a hermit peace receives ;  
 The friendly forest thrusts a screen  
 My refuge and the world between  
 And bathes me in its balmy green!  
 No fret of life may here intrude,  
 To vex the sylvan solitude!”\*

If I wander what seems a tedious while over my sweet and flowery wild meadows, where, in early spring, just as the fresh green of the new grass is perceived,

“The little violet,  
 Penciled with purple on one snowy leaf,”

appears, with the spring-beauty, anemone, and many other gems; and in later summer and autumn the bright flame of the cardinal flower is visible, and

“Golden-rod and aster stain the scene  
 With hue of sun and sky;”

where the crickets chirp, the bees murmur, the birds sing and flit, where floats

“The yellow butterfly  
 Wandering spot of sunshine by,”

and the fragrance of mint and balm is on the air,—why, you’ll forgive me, and, as I cannot help thinking, love me all the better for my waywardness.

Now that that point is settled I feel easier!

It has been my deliberately-formed purpose in the present chapter to take my reader about the farm in order to examine more minutely its natural divisions; to inquire concerning the different soils, and to discuss to some extent the phenomena we shall meet.

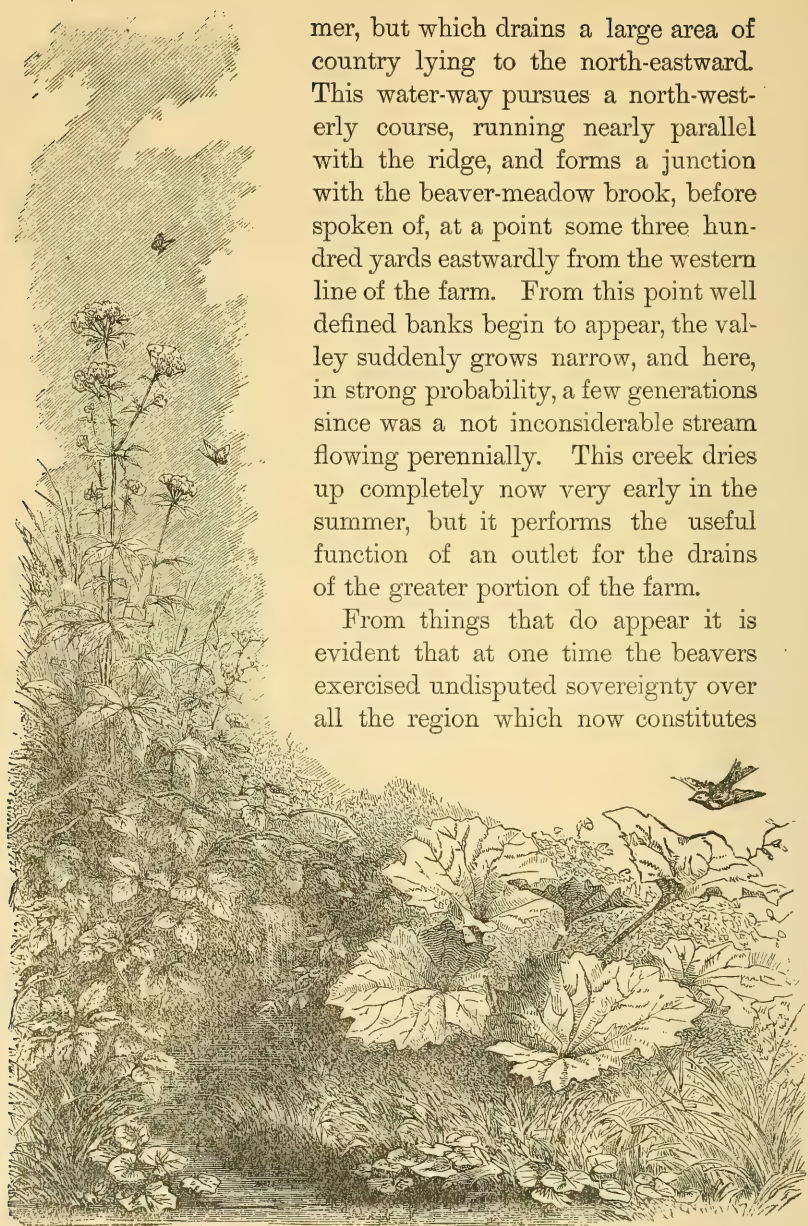
Following along upon the northerly side of the long bank known as the ridge, is a water-course, which is dry in sum-

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\*BAYARD TAYLOR.

mer, but which drains a large area of country lying to the north-eastward. This water-way pursues a north-west-erly course, running nearly parallel with the ridge, and forms a junction with the beaver-meadow brook, before spoken of, at a point some three hundred yards eastwardly from the western line of the farm. From this point well defined banks begin to appear, the valley suddenly grows narrow, and here, in strong probability, a few generations since was a not inconsiderable stream flowing perennially. This creek dries up completely now very early in the summer, but it performs the useful function of an outlet for the drains of the greater portion of the farm.

From things that do appear it is evident that at one time the beavers exercised undisputed sovereignty over all the region which now constitutes



the flats and meadows of Oakfields and much adjoining territory. Water-courses and remains of other works of theirs are visible on every hand. Ruins of a large dam are plainly discernible below the junction of the two creeks we have described; and, doubtless, it was owing to the continued maintenance of a dam here by the curious and sagacious spatula-tailed rodents, through many ages, perhaps,—causing the overflow of the country above and preventing the growth of trees,—that our meadow was formed.

What ingenuity was here displayed! what cunning! sagacity approaching reason! It is due to these industrious, social and courageous little creatures, the christening of this lowland the beaver-meadow. That is the name, then, which it shall bear forever!

But not in the meadow alone were the traces of the beaver and his works discoverable; everywhere over the flats which I have cleared in making the farm, could have been seen, ere obliterated by the plow and harrow, little water-courses, scooped out as neatly as human hands ever performed such work, leading from all points toward the bed of the creek. Some of them were very ancient, for in one or two instances, at least, I have observed huge pine trees growing fairly from the middle of the drain.

The soil of these lower bottoms is, for the most part, sand intimately commingled with vegetable mould. In some places I have found this stratum of soil—plainly an alluvial deposit—fully four feet in thickness. From these old creek-beds the surface gradually rises to the level of the old-time creek-flats, where the soil is a rich sandy loam, and the subsoil usually a mixture of sand and clay. No better land for husbandman's use was ever discovered! It is productive from the beginning, and appears to be practically inexhaustible.

The soil of our ridges varies through all the gamut of sandy ground, from the most nearly worthless, pure white sand,



(only a very little of this!) to the deep, red, iron-oxide-tinted loam. He who deems, however, that any of these ridges are utterly valueless for the farmer's use was never more in error in his life! They have a characteristic which I have seldom heard commented upon, and which I deem of great importance in estimating them, and this it is: Upon being cleared and left lying at commons awhile, or if employed as pasturage, they grow better—increase in fertility—from year to year. A grass of the red-top family begins to grow upon them and anon makes a handsome sward. Where the surface is cut or torn you shall now soon perceive white clover creeping in. Then red clover appears, and afterward other grasses, as the June grass, etc. After this, in process of time, under the hand of judicious management, good crops of grain and vegetables may be grown upon the lightest ridges.

Another feature of these ridges: Moisture does not remain upon their porous soils to any extent, but, after every rainfall, sinks forthwith, and is held deep below the surface for an indefinite period—so long that the most extended drought I have known here has failed to exhaust this store of pure, soft and sweet water. Here I indicate a characteristic which renders the presence of one or more of these ridges upon a farm a thing greatly to be desired.

Speaking of these very soils, in a lecture prepared by him and read before a number of farmers' institutes, held in various portions of Michigan in 1878, the eminent scientist, Dr. R. C. Kedzie, as quaintly as truthfully observes:

"No farmer need question the virtue of any soil that, with instinctive modesty, covers its nakedness with a robe of grass."\* Reference is here had to a habit I mention above.

It is to me a thing inexplicable that such immense tracts of these lands—aggregating many hundreds of thousands

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\*The lecture may be found in the Report of the Michigan State Board of Agriculture for 1878, and is well worth reading.



of acres in the northern half of the lower peninsula of Michigan alone—should have been hitherto allowed almost to go begging for purchasers at merely nominal prices,—for it can be considered little better than that when they remain, as they have lain from a dozen to a score and more of years since they were stripped—*i. e.*, since their more valuable timber of pine and oak was cut off—and only a small fraction of the whole area as yet in the hands of actual settlers. The surface and soil of Oakfields, as described in this and the preceding chapter, will serve to give some idea of what the quality of these lands for the most part is. Some light sandy soils here, it is admitted, and many pine stumps which are to be removed not without considerable expense; but on the other hand, a large proportion of these lands is of surpassing fertility; the soils are deep, rich, and mellow loams; the subsoil is usually of clay. Many of these lands are easily and cheaply cleared; and one of the best features of the whole is that the ridges and the flat lands so alternate with each other almost everywhere that a fair-sized farm will, as a general thing, afford one about the variety of surface he should most desire.

Just think of property like that I have described in Oakfields, lying from three to ten miles distant from a thriving railroad town—a county-seat of noble aspirations and great expectations—with fair roads, excellent markets,—think, I say, of such lands being offered at from three to ten dollars per acre, with easy payments, and no buyers! Our lumbermen are, as I have often argued, practically *giving away* some of the finest lands in the nation, and this, too, to half-reluctant recipients, because, forsooth, both parties are ignorant of the value of the gift! I have been looking about some. I find that in other states, and in remote parts of my own beautiful state, lands no better than those I here speak of, and situated but little, if any, more advantageously as regards roads, markets, propinquity to town and railroad, etc., are selling at from forty to one hundred dollars per

acre to farmers whose intention it is, of course, to use them for naught but agricultural purposes! True, in some instances, there are clearings and other improvements upon the lands last mentioned; but, in these cases, many drawbacks exist, such as deterioration of soil from bad husbandry, of markets by competition, etc., etc. In many instances, however, stark wild-lands, in situations such as I have last described, command the figures last mentioned.

“Oh, judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts,  
And men have lost their reason!”

Our lands worthless! Show us an intelligent and industrious farmer who has occupied any of them for ten years, and who has been blessed with ordinary good luck, who has not prospered beyond all his own anticipations, and who is not (fortune continuing to smile upon him to the extent of keeping himself and family in health) in a fair way soon to become independent! Nay, I contend that almost any man, blessed with health, strength, the will to work, and an ambition to succeed, may begin upon a forty-acre lot as good as these hundreds of thousands of acres will average, and by intelligent management may, within five years, become perfectly independent of fortune. I do not mean by this that he will by any means become wealthy; but he may possess a modest competence.

Time will demonstrate the correctness of the views I herein announce, and a few years hence men will wonder at the fatuity which made them believe our “stripped” pine lands so utterly worthless.

I have no lands to sell; nor am I agent for any one who has; nor interested am I in any real-estate enterprise of whatever sort. But I often reflect upon the thought: What a blessing it would be if the poor families of the large towns, needy, suffering and hopeless, without steady employment, and only inadequate stipends at the best, could each be supplied with a forty-acre lot of these fruitful lands, and enabled

to go forward and work out their temporal salvation in the form of an honest, comfortable livelihood for every member, while they converted the howling wastes into myriads of comfortable, smiling homes! Beautiful lands are here! A fine climate is here! and yet the cities are and will remain overcrowded, and poverty, disease, and distress of every name and nature will continue to afflict the helpless, cringing masses.

“How long, oh Lord, how long!”



## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XXV.

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“We are, we know not what ; light-sparkles floating in the ether of Deity.”

Sartor Resartus, Book I., Chap. 8.

“Ye children of man,
Whose life is a span,
Naked and featherless,
Feeble and garrulous,
Sickly, calamitous creatures of clay.”

ARISTOPHANES: *The Birds*.

“Trust to your philosophy, my masters ; and brag that you have found the bean in the cake ; what a rattle is here with so many philosophical heads.”

MONTAIGNE: *Essays*, Chap. 54.

“His talk was like a stream, which runs
With rapid change from rocks to roses ;
It skipped from politics to puns,
It passed from Mahomet to Moses ;
Beginning with the laws which keep
The planets in their radiant courses,
And ending in some precept deep
For dressing eels or shoeing horses.”

PRAED: *The Vicar*.



CHAPTER XXV

If it should please the reader to denominate this a "chapter of accidents", I should quarrel neither with his definition nor his taste.

Reflecting upon the lines of Ben Jonson, beginning

"Boast not these titles of your ancestors,
Brave youth,"

I ran on the other day, to thinking
of Saxe's comical verses:

"Of all the notable things on earth,
The queerest one is pride of birth
Among our 'fierce democracie';

A bridge across a hundred years,
Without a prop to save it from sneers,—
Not even a couple of rotten peers,—
A thing for laughter, fleers and jeers,
Is American aristocracy.

"English and Irish, French and Spanish,
German, Italian, Dutch and Danish,
Crossing their veins until they vanish
In one conglomeration.
So subtle a tangle of blood, indeed,
No heraldry-Harvey will ever succeed
In finding the circulation."*

**The Proud Miss McBride.*

But no queerer is this disposition among our "fierce democracie" than among the still fiercer aristocracy of the old world.

Pride in a patronymic! of all shabby things!

Let us see: your name is Howard; as you fondly deem,

"All the blood of all the Howards"

courses through your veins. Does it?

You had two parents,—one was a Howard: that halves it, does it not? You had four grand parents, of which one spelled his name with a haitch, a ho, a double hu, a hay, a har, and a dee! In the twentieth generation back (say about the year A. D. 1200), providing there have been no inter-marriages among the members of your family, you had—a thousand?—yea, many, many more than a thousand ancestors; in short,

"To be exact about the fact,"

the number is expressed by the following figures: 1,048,576—one million, forty-eight thousand, five hundred, seventy and six! Pshaw, you are not much of a Howard, after all!

But do not be unduly dejected, therefore, and blush and shrink from sight. It is about the way with all human "greatness," and of everything earthly. Nothing will bear close scrutiny. Analyze the regal magnificence of Dives and it will be found as the filthy rags of Lazarus.

Of course, however, as much as I despise cant and detest *gush*, I do not half hope I shall be able to laugh the world out of its sins in these directions. The vanity which leads up to them is too deeply ingrained in human nature, I fear. But some of its manifestations, and especially in the line of ancestor-worship, are comical enough—if sad—and make one think of Mark Twain at the tomb of Adam,*—which

*Travelling in Asia, MARK approached a spot where a broad, flat stone was inscribed with this legend, "The tomb of Adam." "I leaned upon a pillar," writes the great humorist, "and burst into tears. I

delicious little bit of satire (if satire it be!) they appear to justify. Yes, we have in democratic America the "families" of the Bayards, the Adamses, and numerous others.

"Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you're proud to bear your name;
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,—
Too proud to care from whence I came!"*

"Behold the child, by Nature's kindly law,
Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw;
Some livelier plaything gives his youth delight,
A little louder, but as empty quite;
Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage,
And beads and prayer-books are the toys of age;
Pleased with this bauble still, as that before,
Till, tired, he sleeps, and life's poor play is o'er."†

You were only tickled with another kind of straw. I, too, am a sinner in this kind—"the chief of sinners," indeed! I have been proud and foolish likewise, as what son of Adam has not? I have no right to ridicule, though I expose you.

"Have I not known all earthly vanities,
Learned the inane, and taught inanities?"‡

Here have I long been ambitious of owning a broad domain and stately hall,—have dreamed of it, thought of it, schemed for it, wrought for it, and am at length about convinced that my castle in Spain is only another vain phantom, a thing all of vanity, whether it is ever destined to be achieved or not—and hence not worth achieving!

deem it no shame to have wept over the grave of my poor dead relative.

* * * Noble old man—he did not live to see me—he did not live to see his child. And—I—I—alas, I did not live to see him. Weighed down by sorrow and disappointment, he died before I was born—six thousand brief summers before I was born. But let us try to bear it with fortitude."—*Innocents Abroad*.

*TENNYSON.

†POPE's *Essay on Man*.

‡GOETHE's *Faust*, Act I., Scene 5.



“Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged days? Thou lookest from thy tower to-day; yet a few days and the blast of the desert comes; it howls in thy empty courts!”—OSSIAN,

"Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged days?
Thou lookest from thy tower to-day; yet a few days and the
blast of the desert comes; it howls in thy empty courts!"

So sang Ossian, son of Fingal. And that raven Ecclesiastes is heard to croak as follows:

"I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards;

"I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in
them of all kinds of fruits.

"I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood
that bringeth forth trees. * *

"Then I looked on all the works that my hands had
wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and behold
all was vanity, and vexation of spirit, and there was no
profit under the sun."*

Yes, yes, yes! And next we have the poet-philosopher.
A long line of land-hungry men have cheated themselves
into temporary happiness thus:

"'Tis mine, my children's, and my name's!

How sweet the west wind sounds in my own trees!

How graceful climb the shadows on my hill!

I fancy these pure waters and the flags

Know me as does my dog: we sympathize;

And I affirm my actions smack the soil.

"Where are these men? Asleep beneath the ground;

And strangers, fond as they, their furrows plow.

Earth laughs in flowers to see her boastful boys

Earth-proud,—proud of the earth which is not theirs;

Who steer the plow, but cannot steer their feet

Clear of the grave.

"They added ridge to valley, brook to pond,

And sighed for all that bounded their domain:

This suits me for a pasture; that's my park;

We must have clay, lime, gravel, granite-ledge,

And misty lowland where to go for peat.

The land is well,—lies fairly to the south.

'Tis good when you have crossed the seas and back

* *Eccles.*, II., 4, 5, 6, 11.

To find thy sit-fast acres where you left them.
 Ah, the hot owner sees not Death, who adds
 Him to the land, a lump of earth the more.*
 Hear what the earth says:

“ Mine and yours;
 Mine, not yours.
 Earth endures;
 Stars abide—
 Shine down in the old sea;
 Old are the shores;
 But where are old men?
 I who have seen much
 Such have I never seen.

“ The lawyer’s deed
 Ran sure,
 In tail,
 To them and to their heirs
 Who shall succeed,
 Without fail
 Forevermore.

“ Here is the land,
 Shaggy with wood,
 With the old valley,
 Mound and flood,
 But the heritors?
 Fled like the flood’s foam,†

*The best expression of this solemn truth in all literature occurs in the book of *Job*:

“ Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not. * * Man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and dryeth up; so man lieth down and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep.”—*Job*, XIV., 1, 2, 10, 11, 12.

And ST. JAMES witnesseth:

“ For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away.”—*St. James*, IV., 14.

†HOLMES facetiously expresses it thus:

“ Gone like the tenant that leaves without warning,
 Down the back-entry of time.”



"ONLY WAITING, TILL THE SHADOWS ARE A LITTLE LONGER GROWN."

The lawyer and the laws,
And the kingdom
Clean swept herefrom!

"They called me theirs
Who so controlled me;
Yet everyone willed to stay
And is gone!
How am I theirs
If they cannot hold me,
But I hold them?
When I heard the Earth-song
I was no longer brave;
My avarice cooled
Like lust in the chill of the grave."*

Thus the dream ends in smoke, and, alas! the dreamer in dust.

"Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?"

But Tennyson goes a step farther and declares (what we all know to be the truth) that

"The hills are shadows, and they flow†
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mists, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go."‡

*EMERSON : *Hamatreyer*.

†What TENNYSON expresses so poetically is thus prosaically stated by the geologist:

"The earth, like the body of the animal, is wasted, as the philosophical HUTTON tells us, at the same time it is repaired. It has a state of augmentation; it has another state, which is that of diminution and decay; it is destroyed in one part to be renewed in another; and the operations by which the renewal is accomplished are as evident to the scientific eye as those by which it is destroyed. A thousand causes, aqueous, igneous, and atmospheric, are continually at work modifying the external form of the earth, wearing down the older portions of its surface, and reconstructing newer out of the older: so that in many parts of the world denudation has taken place to the extent of many thousand feet."—LOUIS FIGUIER: *Introduction to The World Before the Flood*.

‡*In Memoriam*.

Shakespeare goes still farther, and mortals fare worse. He leaves us finally not a solid spot to stand on :

“ Our revels now are ended. These our actors
As I foretold you, are all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And like this insubstantial pageant faded;
Leave not a wrack behind.* We are such stuff
As dreams are made on: and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.”†

Lucifer, in a familiar conversation with Festus, one day, thus gave in his testimony :

“ The earth * * shall end.
The stars shall wonder why she comes no more
On her accustomed orbit, and the sun
Miss one of his apostle lights; the moon,
An orphan orb, shall seek the earth for aye,
Through time's untrodden depths, and find her not;
No more shall morn, out of the holy east,
Stream o'er the amber air her level light,
Nor evening, with the spectral fingers, draw
Her star-sprent curtains round the head of earth;
Her footsteps never thence again shall grace
The blue sublime of heaven. Her grave is dug.
I see the stars, night-clad, all gathering,
In long and sad procession. Death's at work.”‡

One would be inclined to think that this were enough; and that poet, and philosopher as well, might be content to pause here. But not so. Not satisfied that others have pre-

*“ And the world passeth away,” *I. John*, II., 17. See also *II. Peter*, II., 10. Also: “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.”—*Revelations*, XXI., 1.

†*Tempest*, Act IV., Scene 1.

‡BAILEY: *Festus*.

dicted the sure destruction, yea, annihilation of the solid-seeming earth, there are who proceed to demonstrate that it never possessed solidity.

Sir Isaac Newton, the great physicist, comes forward and ventures the proposition that nothing about us — no material thing — is, or ever has been, actually what it appears to us. In other words, he believes that “the most solid matter is a most delicate and airy net-work, if net-work it may be called, of which the infinitesimally invisible atoms are a thousand, or, perhaps, a million times their own diameters distant from one another.”

“Atom from atom yawns as far
As moon from earth, or star from star.”*

He believed that all the matter of the universe, compacted, might be put into a box whose capacity is *one cubic inch!* Think of that!

But how fortunate it is for the most of us that matter never becomes so “compacted”! I know a gentleman, I think, (“a real-estate man” is he of the town), who, finding it thus, would e’en take the little lump, coolly pocket and walk off with it, leaving the rest of us to whistle!

The worst has not yet been told. It would really seem, indeed, as if Uncle Ike† had “got it down pretty fine”; — so fine, in fact, that the universe begins to appear to our apprehension like the traditional “little eend of nothing, whittled off”, — but others have found

“In the lowest deep, a lower deep
Still threatening to devour!”‡

*EMERSON: *Nature*.

†Charge me not with irreverence: 'tis but a term of endearment. Remember “Old Put.,” “Honest Old Abe.,” etc. Yea, and did not the *Shepherd*, at the very last of the ambrosial *Noctes* call Alexander the Great, King of Macedon, “Sandy”?

‡MILTON: *Paradise Lost*.

The great German metaphysician, Kant, conceded, indeed, that such a thing as matter exists; but his theory makes it out *no great matter* to us, for he held that we can know nothing of it, for it is not at all like what it appears to us.

“Things are not what they seem.”*

Then came Bishop Berkeley and John Fearn (the latter is almost forgotten, by the way; but I stand for justice, and here restore him his rights) and *proved* that there is no such thing existent as matter,† it being all a figment of the mind.‡ And all these theorists are backed by numerous followings.§

*LONGFELLOW: *Psalm of Life*.

†CARLYLE words it thus: So that this so solid-seeming world, after all, were but an airy image, our *me* the only reality; and nature, with its thousand-fold production and destruction, but the reflex of our own inward force, the fantasy of our dream.—*Sartor Resartus*, Book VIII.

But of course the physical part of the *me*, the *ego*, is in the same condition as all other matter.

‡All visible things are emblems; what thou seest is not there on its own account; strictly taken, it is not there at all. Matter exists only spiritually, and to represent some idea and body it forth.—CARLYLE.

§This doctrine one of its most able and candid opponents admits it is impossible to confute, at the same time he asserts it impossible to believe it. Many anti-idealists, however, have contented themselves with indulging in ridicule of the system of philosophy formulated by the learned and benevolent bishop. Thus BYRON has his quirk:

“When Bishop Berkeley said there was no matter,
And proved it, ’twas no matter what he said;
They say his system ’tis in vain to batter,—
Too subtle for the airiest human head.
But who yet can believe it?”

VOLTAIRE said: “According to this doctrine, ten thousand men killed by ten thousand cannon-shots, are in reality nothing more than ten thousand apprehensions of the mind.”

The great DR JOHNSON, speaking to a man who had been defending the Berkeleyan system, and who had risen to go, observed: “Pray, sir, don’t leave us, for we may perhaps forget to think of you, and then you will cease to exist.”

Doesn't all this make you feel small, and light, and shadowy? To think that this feeling, thinking I, which has all along believed it was enjoying good jokes, suffering physical pain, and growing muscular on solid food, should be thus itself resolved into a mere idea?*

Had Hamlet realized all this he would never have given utterance to the exclamation:

"O that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew."

Poor Hamlet! the metaphysicians have melted *all flesh* into a finer, thinner, more attenuated or ethereal *something* than was "dreamt of in your philosophy".

But there is one thing I am more than half resolved upon: To *sell the farm* before the news gets abroad that it has only an apocryphal existence — or, in other words, that its existence is all in the eye, or the idea! My faith in the reality of reality is much shaken. So is the substance of a *solid* investment reduced to a shadow! Pope avers that

"A little learning is a dangerous thing."

I am almost persuaded, regarding certain of the erudite philosophers whose systems have herein been cited, that much learning hath made them mad, and am hence ready to

Among Americans the learned DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON and the celebrated JONATHAN EDWARDS, embraced BISHOP BERKELEY's philosophy, and even DR. McCOSH is reported to have written (in an article for a review) concerning the system: "Many are turning toward it with longing."

FICHTE followed KANT and elaborated the system which has been called the "selfish philosophy", which comes closer to the idealism of BERKELEY than any other.

*Are we not spirits that are shaped into a body, into an appearance; and that fade away again into air and invisibility? This is no metaphor, it is a simple scientific fact. We start out of nothingness, take figures, and are apparitions; around us, as around the veriest specters, is eternity; and to eternity minutes are as years.—*Sartor Resartus*, Book III., chap. VIII.

conclude that the *much* is more dangerous than the *little*; and, having been made to feel uncomfortable by these learned speculations, I am about prepared to acknowledge the truth of Gray's aphorism:

"Where ignorance is bliss
'Tis folly to be wise,"

(which to this date I have always questioned), and to wish from my heart that these old worthies had kept their philosophy to themselves! Yea, of a verity, might we ask with Elephaz the Temanite: "Should a wise man utter vain knowledge? Should he reason with unprofitable talk, or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?"*

"Yet let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast."†

Many of the discoveries of natural science which have heretofore disturbed the equanimity of people, and for a time destroyed the peace of mind even of statesmen, rulers and high-priests, have finally been generally accepted as true, and yet the world has continued to marry and be given in marriage, to traffic, to write, read, eat, drink, sleep, laugh, joke, plot, in the old accustomed ways. It was reckoned flat blasphemy in Galileo when he maintained the doctrine that the earth revolves, and we all remember the posing query of the good old rustic deacon when the then generally admitted fact was first brought to *his* notice: "Then why don't the water all slop out of my mill-pond, hey?"

We now indeed "see through a glass darkly"; the time may come, or, if the glorious event cannot be conceived of as likely to occur in time, in eternity, to which we are all rapidly hastening, we may at last find the explanation of all the mysteries which

"So trouble us here."

**Job*, XV., 2, 3.

†BURNS: *Man was Made to Mourn*.

In the meantime I would again say, probably it will not, on the whole, pay us to regard too seriously these stated results of the "lucubrations of old philosophers", nor to suffer them to interfere greatly with our every-day concerns. It is barely possible that mistakes have been made by others besides Moses. Read what the poet Byron, himself a thinker, too, has to object against philosophy in general:

"If that I did not know philosophy
To be of all our vanities the motliest,
The merest word that ever fooled the ear
From out the school-men's jargon, I should deem
The golden secret, the lost 'Kalon' found
And seated in my soul."*

Perhaps there is some ground for the accusation; but notwithstanding all this the ingenious but ingenuous Gascon, Montaigne, lamented that philosophy had so fallen into disrepute in his own day.

"'Tis a thousand pities [quoth he] that matters should be in such a pass in this age of ours that philosophy, even with men of understanding, should be looked upon as a vain and fantastic name, a thing of no use, no value, either in opinion or effect."†

The writer has no mind for the fine-drawn cobwebs of metaphysics, and hence will not undertake at present to demonstrate the truth or falsity of any of the various systems now in vogue. I remember Plato says that "philosophy must inevitably fall under the censure of the world";‡ but this might be and it not be entirely the fault of philosophy. I will only pause here to express my feeling of mild wonder that the learned and acute hair-splitters whose trade is metaphysics should be led by their studies to such antipodic conclusions as they sometimes are; as, for example, where in his theory of the non-existence of matter the good and pious

* *Manfred*, Act III., Scene 1.

† *Essays*, Book I., Chapter XXV.

‡ *Republic*, II.

Bishop Berkeley beheld the proof of divine revelation, while, on the other hand, the genial, free-thinking philosopher, Hume, saw therein a conclusive argument *against* revelation; and to state, after further and full consideration of the somewhat important matter (no pun intended—such levity would be inexcusable in discussing subjects so grave and weighty!), to proceed, for the present, at least, with my farming, and scribbling, in the virtuous manner and according to the honest plans I had sometime since marked out, turning for sanction and encouragement to the words of the preacher:

“I perceive that there is nothing better than that man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?”*

Neither let us forget the philosophical counsel of the great Dr. Browne:

“In bivious theorems and Janus-faced doctrines let virtuous considerations state the determination.”†

I shall not allow myself to be troubled too greatly, lest when I go to my pasture to find my spotted heifer that, according to the theory of Kant, I shall be in danger of driving up the brindled bull instead, or the eccentric Ettrick Shepherd’s Bonassus;‡ or, providing Sir Isaac Newton’s *compacting* idea is correct, that I shall get much too little for my trouble; or, again, should Berkeley’s doctrine stand, that I shall pursue, perhaps secure, drive to the yard and endeavour to draw milk from a *dry abstraction*!

If it should transpire at last that I do not own the farm, but that, according to the Earth-song, the farm owns me;—or if it turn out according to Kant that the farm is not at all what it appears to be, and hence, I suppose, that the soil may be a great deal better, or as much worse, than I deem it;—or if, according to Tennyson, my hills are destined one

**Eccles.*, II., 22.

†SIR THOMAS BROWNE: *Christian Morals*, Part III., §3.

‡See *Noctes Ambrosianæ*.

day to fall into the habit of *flowing* like water, my solid clay flats to *melting* like mists, and nothing will *stand* (not even the pine stumps!);—or if, as Newton taught, I don't own enough in the whole domain to make a *compact* village lot;—or, finally, if we accept Berkeley's deductions, and hence are forced to the conviction that there is no land here at all, no spotted heifer, no milk (what a doctrine for the milkmen!), no physical *I* even, and if I sold there would be no material purchaser, naught but immaterial impressions all round,—images of the mind,—why, it is pretty certain that all these things will never be generally-recognized, positively-admitted facts during my day, and hence it is all one, so far as the present generation is concerned, anyhow.

I don't know: I am only a plain, blunt, conservative old farmer, and I hate, and I can't help it, to have my honestly-imbibed, if old-fashioned ideas of things disturbed in this manner. I do dislike to think of my beautiful, "gazelle-eyed" heifer as a spotted idea, simply, or a "gazelle-eyed" "net-work of infinitesimally small particles", which are, comparatively speaking, very distant one from another, (though, to be sure, neighbor Kinney has an animal that would answer that description measureably well!), or that she may not be even gazelle-eyed, or spotted, if a "solid" heifer at all!

Ever since I began (and it is only comparatively recently) to look a little into metaphysics, and despite all my efforts to overcome the weakness, I have been troubled with this sense of the shadowy indefiniteness of things,—of the insecurity of material possessions. When my white Cochin rooster crows to rouse me from my slumber these late mornings, I start up, yawn and rub my eyes *abstractedly*, and involuntarily image to myself a chanticleer so thin and spectral that the rays of light shine through his body, flapping wings that may not be wings at all, but ears, perhaps, or sails, or oars, or fins, or carpets, or flags, or broadswords,—or perhaps they don't flap, and the old cock only thinks they

do; or perhaps he don't think so, but is only making me think so; and then I persuade myself that it was not a cock's crowing at all, that this was all in my mind, and so I turn over and fall asleep again. Thus my business suffers! It will not do, my friends, to mix too much philosophy with our farming.

In the meantime my taxes must be paid: there's nothing indefinite nor uncertain about that matter! And the interest upon the mortgage is about due: there is no way that I know of to so *compact that* as to make it seem small. The grocer's bill has been presented: wonder if he will accept payment for his groceries in my ideas! Alas, I see not how metaphysics are to be made useful to us poor husbandmen during these hard times! And verily do I now perceive the wisdom of the maxim of Rochefoucauld: "Philosophy triumphs easily over past and over future evils, but present evils triumph over philosophy." "This also is vanity and vexation of spirit!"



MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XXVI.



“But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent.”

BURNS.

“For this he chose a farm in Deva’s vale. * * *
In this calm seat he drew the healthful gale,
Mere mixed the chief, the patriot, the swain ;
The happy monarch of his sylvan train,
Mere, sided by the guardians of the fold,
He walked his rounds, and cheered his blest domain ;
His days, the days of unstained nature, rolled
Replete with peace and joy, like patriarchs of old.”

THOMPSON: *Castle of Indolence.*





CHAPTER XXVI.

AIR and sweet are many of the pictures of my past life which memory still fondly holds;—and this is one of them.

It was a beautiful summer evening. Several persons were gathered upon the eastern veranda of the farm house, enjoying the clover-scented air that came to them, cool and delicious, over the rich and extensive meadow, near-lying. The latter had been gladdened in the afternoon by a succession of soft, pleasant showers. Later the sky had cleared, and the sun had set in golden splendor. Now, a half hour after, only a few fleecy clouds remained. No moon was

visible, but

“Through the luminous air,
Large, loving and languid, the stars, here and there,
Like the eyes of passionate women, looked down
On a world whose sole tender light was their own.”*

My father was here on a visit, and he and myself were engaged in discussing a question which had been the subject of conversation with us already, and frequently, as the reader has been faithfully apprised in foregoing pages. Malvina was of the group; near at hand a flirtation pro-

* *Lucile.*

gressed between the black-eyed coquette who had *quasi* charge of the kitchen, and a new man hired to help us through haying and harvest; while two or three others of the boys constituting the farm-gang lounged about and listened to the debate, or to the notes of the whip-poor-will which occasionally sounded sharp and clear, "like a flute in the forest," or conversed with one another in subdued tones. The low musical murmur of the bees, in their snug little village on the lawn, came soothingly to our ears. Let's break in upon the discussion at any convenient point.

"What work in the world," queried my interlocutor,—much at his ease in a large rustic rocking-chair, and pausing in his talk occasionally to stroke caressingly a handsome gray cat, which had wooed and won him during his present visit to the farm,—“What work in the world would it best satisfy your ambition to accomplish?”

"To write a good book," I answered unhesitatingly.

"What sort of a book?" was the next question.

"Oh, something in pure literature, I think," was my response.

"A poem?" persisted my questioner.

"Well, yes; if I could make a really good one," I said.

"One like *Paradise Lost*, for instance," suggested my companion.

"Yes," I returned carelessly, "or one just half as good."

"If I was going to write a book, I'd like it to be one something like Swift's *Tale of a Tub*, or *Gulliver's Travels*," cried my father with enthusiasm. "There's wit for you," he added, "and sense and courage, too."

Then there was a little pause, while a cricket chirped among the plantain leaves by the side of the path leading to the gate, and a zephyr toyed with the leaves of the Lombardy poplar close at hand. Presently my father began again, thus:

"What do you think of the school-teacher's lot?"

"I believe the business of the teacher to be one of the holiest works given man to do!" I asserted with an earnestness that was perfectly sincere.

"You do!" ejaculated my companion in a surprised tone.

"I certainly do," I replied.

"Well, you used to be a teacher; why didn't you stick to the business?" inquired my tormentor with a little chuckle.

I replied: "Yes, I taught quite a number of terms when a boy; and I shall never enjoy anything better than I enjoyed that. And I shall never lay down the tools of any trade with a more comfortable sense of having done my work thoroughly and conscientiously than I felt when I laid down my pen and rule after making out my final last-day's report as a teacher!"

"Should have thought you would have worked along in the line of teaching, then, instead of switching off into law, journalism, and, at length, into this farming!" exclaimed my father. And then he asked: "Wouldn't a professorship at some good institution, say, like your *Alma Mater* you have bragged so much about, or some similar school, or college, have suited your taste better than these things?"

"Why," I answered, laughing, "I didn't have any such thing offered me."

"Don't you suppose it might have been?" was the next troublesome query; to which I replied by quoting:

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen
The saddest are these: 'It might have been.'"

"But," persisted my father, "if you think the teacher's is so sacred a calling——"

"I do!" I exclaimed.

"And you spent so much time in qualifying yourself——" he was going on.

"Only a few years," I interrupted again, "and then that——"

But he wanted to talk, and broke in here:

"Now see here: there's your old college. What a beautiful — delightful — place it is according to your tell——"

"A perfect elysium, particularly in the spring and summer seasons!" I exclaimed enthusiastically.

"Well, it seems to me you ought to have been content to stay there and teach — and write, if you must — instead of trying so many things and to so little purpose!" exclaimed my father with some warmth, for my numerous interruptions had irritated him, and he felt like inflicting a slight punishment upon his undutiful son.

Thereupon we all laughed merrily, until the echoes,

"The horns of elf-land faintly blowing,"

replied from the forest — dimly seen in the gloaming like a sable curtain down beyond the great gray barn.

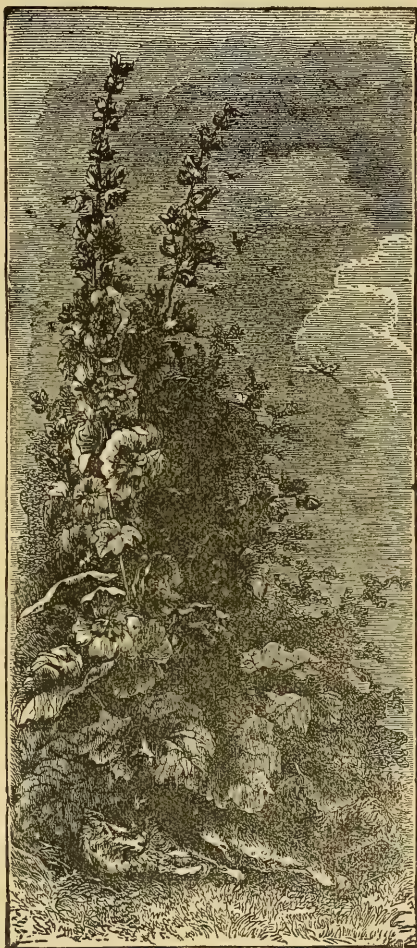
"Yes, father," I began to discourse, after a pause, "it has indeed ever appeared to me that the excellent men who give instruction at my dear old college have their lines cast in pleasant places. The college grounds are most beautiful, and are fairly situated with reference to town for convenience, and with relation to streams and woods for prospect. The society is intellectual, and of the best. They live close to nature there. They have books, — cultivate science, literature, art. The work of these instructors is as holy as that of the clergy. Peace reigns: improvement is the watchword! Why shouldn't these professors, who are known, and respected, and looked up to, far and wide — why should they not felicitate themselves upon their earthly lot? And yet — and yet——" I added, half musingly, and with hesitating accents, "I could not be contented as one of these!"

"Well!" my father burst out in astonishment, "I thought you had it fixed up just in shape to thoroughly captivate a romantic taste like yours! And now you don't want it! And why not?"

"I'll tell you why I could not be contented as a teacher," I answered slowly and deliberately. "It is nothing inher-

ent in the calling; but it lies in this: Teachers are not sufficiently independent. Almost every teacher, from the sweet-faced, white-aproned, dimpled school-ma'am, or the more pompous and pretentious, if not more learned, male pedagogue who conducts the country school during the winter, to the scholarly and dignified personages who preside over our most illustrious universities, is subject to the dictation of a 'board'. This board is composed of members of whom a majority may or may not be educated, liberal, Christian gentlemen. Hardships sometimes grow out of this matter of which the public press takes notice. There is injustice done and heart-burning caused of which the public never knows. But if I could teach, like Plato, in yon grove by the eastern road——"

"The sun would scorch your class among those *scattering trees!*" cried my father, his voice betraying a certain contemptuous tone



when it sounded the last two words, for which I was not at all unprepared. Whereat the speaker, and Malvina, and I laughed again, and awoke my old friend of the *Stryx* family down in the dim north-west, and he laughed in reply, "Hoo-hoo, hoo-hoo, hoorer-hoo." Then we relapsed into silence, and all listened to the stridulous notes of a katy-did which seemed to come from among the hollyhocks, or the morning-glories, near the eastern door of the low southern wing of the dwelling. Anon I spoke again, addressing my father:

"Why are you so persistent in arguing against my farming enterprise?" I demanded.

Then he laughed good-humoredly and replied: "Well, I hardly know."

"Am I not very pleasantly circumstanced here?" I further inquired.

"Yes; it's as pleasant a place as *I* want!" he returned with emphasis.

"I have my books," I rejoined, "and my friends; Malvina has her bees, and her painting,—and we are both very happy,—nothing to trouble us——"

"That mortgage!" whispered a voice at my ear.

The night grew some shades darker, and silence once more fell upon the little group.

After an interval my father sighed and again spoke: "I wish the old 'Squire had been as contented upon his farm as you are here," he said.

"Yes," I assented, "'twas very foolish of him, *I* think, to leave his pleasant home to wander nomadically in the wilderness with that portable shingle-mill."

"I wish you would write him about the matter, urging him to sell the mill and come back to the farm," said my father.

"'Twould do no good," I answered gloomily.

"But try it, anyhow," he persisted.

To please him I promised to write my cousin very soon; and if the reader will complete the present chapter he will

discover with what faithfulness I carried out the wish of the kindest parent in the world.

MY EPISTLE TO THE OLD ROMAN.

VENERABLE 'SQUIRE:—From this my pleasant tabernacle in the green wilderness of the land of Oakfields, do I send thee greeting:

Thou and I have come down in company from a former generation; yea, from an early age of the world, even from a hoary antiquity are we together descended.

We have beheld the bare boughs of the early spring, have seen them put forth buds, the buds unfold to blossoms, the blossoms turn to fruits, the fruits ripen, then decay, and the seeds thereof sprout again in the beginning of another cycle, for many and many a year; until lo! and behold! the crow's feet have left their ominous imprint in our faces, the calipers have become deeply graven upon our cheeks, and one of us has lost the hirsute appurtenant which of yore invested and ornamented his cranium.

Side by side we mounted the horizon walls in the morning of life, twin suns, abounding in joy and light and life; side by side we passed the meridian; side by side let us descend in the evening of our days, our joy chastened by experience, our light dimmed a little by sadness, our life a little less full and abounding, but still with sufficiency of each abiding with us to enable us to find happiness in the span that remaineth unto us, and to gaze with pleasure upon the past.

Time hath dealt not unmercifully with us; and if he hath robbed us of aught which we spared but reluctantly, he hath kindly supplied us with strength and fortitude to endure the affliction.

Ancient J. P.: I have been constrained to break the profound silence maintained between us, for lo! these many months, by a matter that oppresseth my spirit.

It is with concern that I have learned of thy resolution, which thou hast already acted upon, to abandon thy pleas-

ant abiding-place, and thy calling as a tiller of the soil, to take to the wilderness and to what thou conceivest to be, or hopest will prove to thee, a more remunerative, if not a more agreeable and honorable calling than that which thou quittest.

It is, I am aware and must confess, a move perfectly consistent with thy former teaching, and thine oft-expressed inclination; but I am loth to believe now, as before, that thy teaching hath been marked by wisdom; and I should have been glad to have had to commend in thy practice what I should have termed a glorious inconsistency, hadst thou continued steadfast in the noble calling of the husbandman,—the walk of thy forefathers,*—that walk in which the first man trod,†—the calling of the patriarchs,—the calling nearest to and most blest of God in all ages.‡

It is a practice or profession, too, that is safe and secure, and by which the faithful worker may, if not, indeed, always become great and opulent, like the man of Uz at the last,§ at least compass a livelihood,|| and lay up treasure against an evil day, the coming whereof no man foretelleth.ζ

Alas! how short-sighted is man; and how often, in the feverishness of his desires and the perverseness of his nature, doth he put away from him those things provided by a wise Providence for his highest behoof, and choose idols for his worship that in the end will cruelly destroy him,—even as the Israelites in the wilderness, forsaking the true faith, bowed down to brazen images!Δ

*“Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set.”—*Prov.*, XXII., 28.

†Consult *Gen.*, Chap. III., 23.

‡“The husbandman that laboreth must be the first partaker of the fruits.”—*II. Tim.*, Chap. II., 6.

§See *Job*, Chap. XLII., 12. || *Prov.*, XII., 11.

ζ*Ecl.*, Chap. XI., 8.

ΔConsult *Exodus*, Chap. XXXII., 1 to 6.

Let not thine anger kindle against thy correspondent and kinsman, oh, venerable 'Squire! that thus he is moved to put these sayings upon thee,—for, indeed, his heart is concerned for thee, and he can but believe that in the transaction of which he here speaketh, thou hast displayed some of the prominent characteristics of the beast which Balaam, the son of Bozor bestrode, and which, as it is recorded in the sacred text, once opened his mouth and spake.*

The scribe may be wrong in the views which he here advanceth, and his words may appear harsh and unkind; pardon, I entreat thee, all that in this thou perceivest amiss, and believe for the sake of our early and later companionship, that had I loved thee less I had spoken less plainly.

Nay, indeed, well I know that if aught there be in this friendly epistle that thou canst not approve, then wilt thou be the last person upon the green footstool to swallow the nauseous dose with a pleasant countenance but a bitter soul,† or to chew in silence the quid of discontent against thy sincere, if over-zealous friend and ancient play-fellow; but I adjure thee to remember the words of Solomon concerning reproofs.‡

Then verily say I unto thee, oh, thou Relic of Ages that are Past! if matter hath escaped my pen which thou likest not, aught that disturbeth the serenity of thy soul, stay not thy hand, but put thy pen to paper and freely speak thy thoughts against an erring fellow-mortal; then let thine anger have an end. Banish me not for my transgressions, I beseech of thee, from the light of thy countenance forever!

But, oh, my time-worn Kinsman! be not over hard of heart, nor severe in thy verbal chastisement of the offender: but look with all forbearance upon the fault of thy friend, for the reasons I have above set forth, and for a further and, perhaps, stronger reason, of which it will be sufficient only to remind thee:

*See *Num.*, Chap. XXII, 28, 30; also *II. Peter*, II, 15, 16.

†*Rev.*, Chap. X, 9, 10. ‡*Prov.*, XII, 1, 15; also *Prov.*, XV, 22.

Thou wilt find the undersigned a truly dangerous man to have contention withal; for though, physically speaking, his strength be weakness, and by this untoward circumstance he might be prevented from administering unto thee the bodily castigation which thou mightst well have deserved, still far is he from being helpless or unable to inflict punishment upon his enemies, for he yet maintaineth his interest with and exerciseth a measure of control over that tremendous monster,—more terrible to encounter than the great beast of seven heads and ten horns which St. John describeth,*—huger than the leviathan referred to in the book of *Job*,†—more powerful for mischief than the old serpent which tempted Eve in the garden,‡ to wit: the Briar-armed, Hydra-headed, Argus-eyed Press!

But very far indeed was it from the purpose of the scribe in this epistle to scold, vilify, or threaten thee, oh, time-honored Pilgrim through this Vale of Tears! or to fill thy heart with bitter feelings, or thy head with vain imaginings.

I have earnestly desired to lead thee into greener pastures,§ and to forestall the hanging of thy harp on the willows of Babylon!||

I would fain prevent thy wandering in the wilderness forty years,ζ or for a season longer or shorter, reminding thee that not in worldly wealth,Δ not in fame, not in popu-

**Rev.*, XIII., 1.

†Consult *Job*, XLI.

‡*Gen.*, III., 1—5.

§*Psalms*, XXIII., 2.

||“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion! We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.”—*Psalms*, CXXXVII., 1, 2.

ζConsult *Ex.*, *Lev.*, and *I. Num.*

“Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, as in the days of temptation in the wilderness:

“When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.”—*Heb.*, III., 8, 9.

Δ“He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this also is vanity.”—*Eccles.*, V., 10.

“The love of money is the root of all evil.”—*I. Tim.*, VI., 10. See also *I. Prov.*, XXIII., 4, 5.

larity, doth happiness consist; but in a mind that is at ease, inhabiting a body that retaineth its health and its soundness.

I would remind thee that the so-called goods of this world are but filthy rags,* indeed, in comparison with a mind that is void of offense,† and the approval of good men and angels.‡

I admit to thee, beloved Kinsman! that in the husbandman's pursuit are no sudden and showy successes, no fortunes made in a day, nor yet in a few weeks—"explosively," as one has adopted the term—and the advantage I claim therefor is an honest and comfortable security, a success moderately certain, to be reaped by years of patient—and, if we will it so, pleasant—industry; no violence done to our neighbor, nor yet to our consciences, with few perturbations of any sort, and amidst what we may make for ourselves and our loved ones, the most agreeable and wholesome associations and influences.§

*"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries which shall come upon you.

"Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten.

"Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days."—*James V.*, 1, 2, 3.

†"Better is a handful with quietness than both hands full with travail and vexation of spirit."—*Eccles.*, IV., 6.

‡"A good name is better than precious ointment."—*Eccles.*, VII., 1. See also *Prov.*, XXII., 1.

§I deem the claim is authorized by the following, as well as by many other passages of scripture, viz:

"Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men."—*Prov.*, XXII., 29.

"Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.

"Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee.

"Let thy fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of thy youth."—*Prov.* V., 15, 17, 18. *Read the entire chapter.*

"Behold that which I have seen; it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor that he taketh under

I agree with thee, moreover, that in divers other callings at sundry times there seemeth to the eye of him who looketh only on the outward appearance, such instant and brilliant flights in prosperity, on the part of certain fortunate men, that they can be likened to naught so well as the meteor, which appeareth to vault into the air from nothingness, and to pursue his triumphant way through the heavens, and which, while he remaineth visible, doth proceed in a blaze of glory that dazzleth every beholder.

But verily, verily say I unto thee that couldst thou a little further pursue the flight of that bolide which hath with its great splendor both so blinded the eyes and confused the minds of the sons of men that it seemeth to them fit to be likened to nothing less than a visitant from Heaven itself, then shouldst thou find that the light thereof goeth out,—is extinguished in utter darkness,—and the remnant thereof falleth to earth ignominiously, a dull, dead stone!

So it is, oh, Surviving Link, which unitest the present with a former generation! so it is with the upstart splendors which thou viewest around thee in that portion of the earthly heritage known as the business world.

In nine cases out of ten,—yea, in the proportion of nineteen and one-half out of every score,—where thou markest the shooting and in its rapidity and its glory it doth recall to thy mind the career of the beautiful rocket, the descent thereof—to employ ancient symbolism—shall be as that of the stick which formeth the nucleus of the devoted toy, and the end shall be darkness and eternal oblivion!

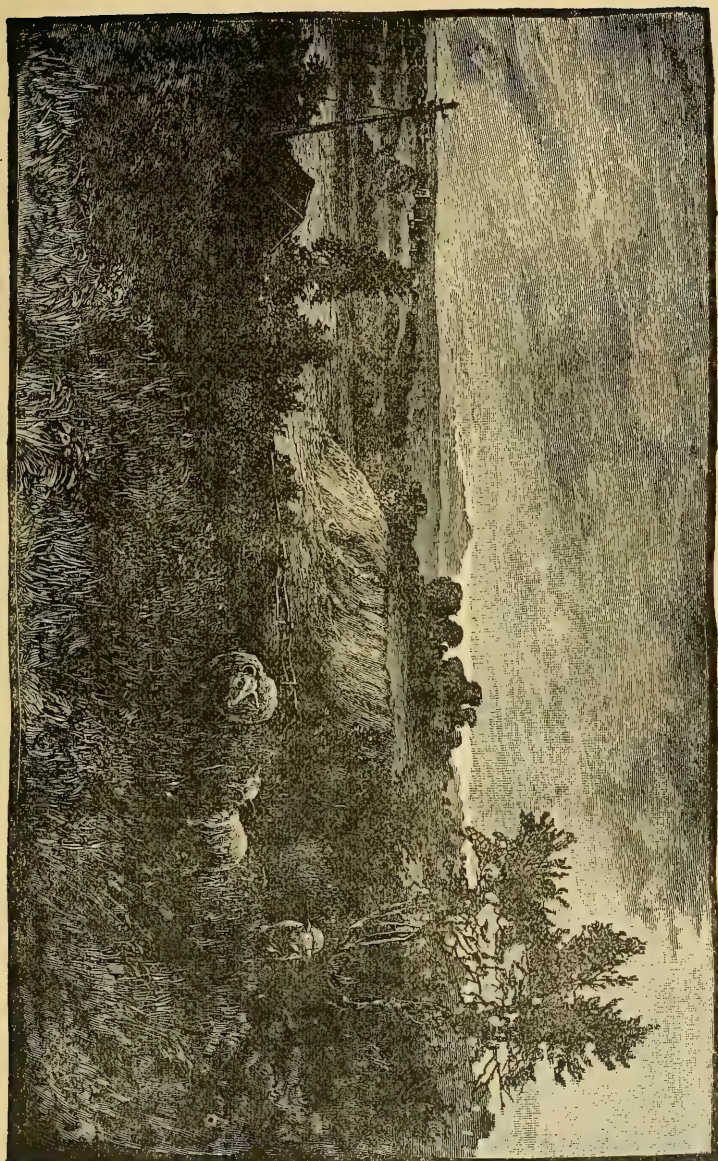
the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him; for it is his portion.”—*Eccles.*, V., 18.”

“I know that there is no good in them but for a man to rejoice and do good in his life.

“And also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor, it is the gift of God.

“Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion; for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?”—*Eccles.*, III., 12, 13, 22.

“HOW BEAUTIFUL, LIKE A VISION OF THE PROMISED LAND,”



History maketh note mainly of those who succeed,* and the stars which have been lost from the firmament, no man numbereth or holdeth in recollection!

How beautiful, like a vision of that promised land which visited the slumbers of the Israelitish wanderers in the wilderness, would it appear to me to view thee seated, in abiding content, by thy cottage door, in thine own goodly domain, which thou art now deserting, under thine own vine and fig-tree,† the wife of thy bosom and thine olive branches‡ by thy side, thine own flocks and herds feeding in thy fields and on thy hill-sides, thy presence an ornament, thy reputation a fragrance in thy community, the whole afternoon of thy life passing like that of a bland day in our golden season of Indian summer!

But Lingering Remembrance of days that are no more! Monument of Ancient Justice! Twin Relic (with the writer hereof) of the Golden Age! the waning evening warneth me that this epistle must have an end. Forgive, I again pray thee, whatever thou findest herein that appeareth harsh or ill-said.

May the frosts of years rest lightly upon thy venerable crown,—in short may they (as they well may) slip off altogether!

May peace be thine, and much good material for jokes!

May thy days still be long in the land and (in the language of the humorous but unlettered Hibernian) thy nights a mere nothing!

Mayst thou, in any walk whatsoever, aye “flourish like a green bay tree”; and when the summons to “join that innumerable caravan,” that moves so mysteriously to “that bourne whence no traveler returns”—*alive*—of which the

*Consult *Prov.*, I., 10 to 19; also *Prov.*, XIII., 11.

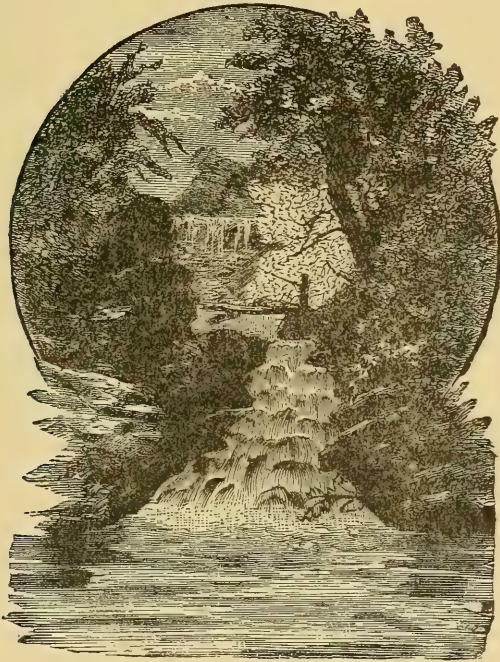
†*Micah*, IV., 4.

‡“Children like olive plants round about thy table.”—*Psalms*, CXXVIII., 3.

bright poets have spoken, finally comes to thee, may it find thee prepared to meet it with that same sweet smile—"child-like and bland," and audible—with which thou hast ever been able to meet and to greet a good joke!

By the hand of thy kinsman, the fourth day of the ninth month of the one hundred and seventh year of the independence of our common country.

HEZ.



MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XXVII.

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"History, which is, indeed, little more than the register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind."

GIBBON: *Decline and Fall, Etc.*

"This is the truth the poet sings."

TENNYSON: *Locksley Hall.*

"By which I don't wish to be understood as intimating that the scalpin' wretches who are in the Injin business at the present day are of any account, or calculated to make home happy."

ARTEMAS WARD: *His Travels.*

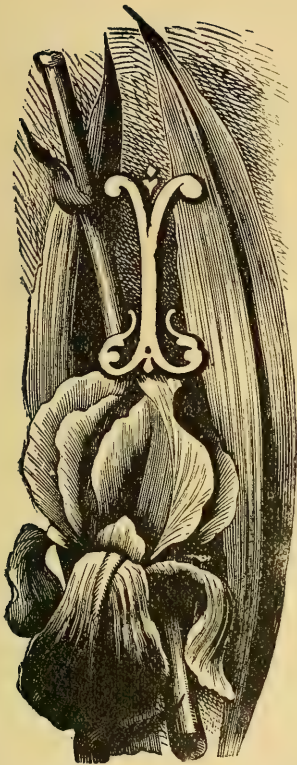
"Lo! the poor Indian!"

POPE: *Essay on Man.*

"If from the evidence here advanced the reader should conclude that the course of events was, on the whole, as I have here traced it, he would not be far wrong."

THUCYDIDES.





## CHAPTER XXVII.

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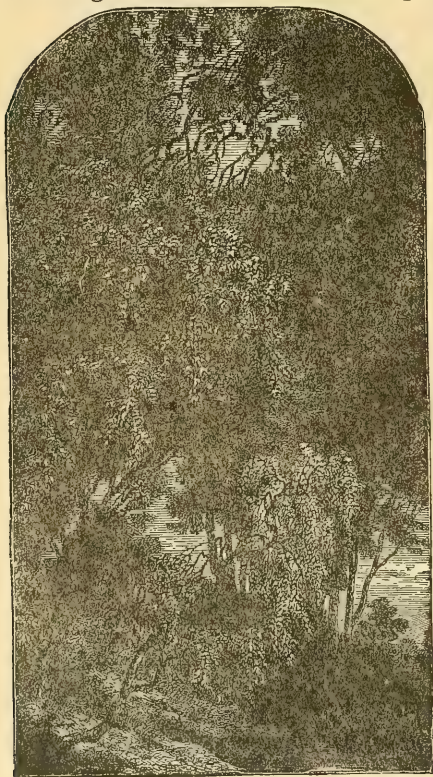
It will never cease to be a matter of regret with me that there is nothing of a remarkable or romantic character connected with the history of that territory which now constitutes the farm. No battle was ever fought here,—no murder, pillage, or robbery committed. There are no ruins here save those of the works of that very interesting little animal, the beaver. If the Indians ever hunted, trapped, fished, or fought here, they left no mark or monument from which to determine the facts. To be sure it is much more than barely possible that the aborigines, at a day long anterior to

my own time, knew intimately every foot of this ground; for the fact is patent that here at one time were to be found valuable fur-bearing animals in great numbers, and lying, as my tract does, at the head-waters of a branch of the Sturgeon creek (the Waterloo) on the one hand, and very near those of the Kawkawlin river,—which flows to the eastward, and is a tributary to Saginaw Bay,—on the other, both of which streams, as is well known, they were quite familiar with, there can scarcely be a doubt entertained by the intelligent person who gives the subject a little consideration, that the red-man—indolent, cowardly, and little enterprising as he

undoubtedly for the most part is, and ever has been — ventured thus far from the shores of the larger streams,—which they were at all times — I have it from the lips of an unusually bright half-breed who dwelt among them, as well as by personal observation — very loth to leave. An Indian is a craven: whatever else he may be, he is, always and everywhere, at heart a most abject and unmitigated coward! a white-livered, if a red-skinned, animal! He is ever fearful, in broad-day and upon his most accustomed paths, of meeting some traditional foe of his tribe. He is full of superstition, and usually apprehensive of the sudden appearance of *Gimnetoes*, or evil spirits on “the night-side of nature”. Nothing is easier than to create a panic in the camp of Chip-

pewa *braves*, by reporting the sudden approach of “Sauks”, or Sioux. The red brethren have likewise been known to suffer to such an extent with their nerves from the narration of an evening by a good pale-faced yarn-spinner in camp, of certain mild-flavored ghost-stories, as to be unable to go to sleep for long hours after lying down.

Had there existed here an ancient growth of sugar-maple trees, the unsightly gashes made by the axes of the dusky sugar-makers, would have remained, the plain evidence of their



former presence here, if such presence had been. But notwithstanding the absence of all direct proof, I deem it perfectly safe to assume that this ground was in olden days well known to Indian hunters and trappers, that "the camp-fires of the red-men" have lighted up the old forests hereabout, and irradiated the low-hanging mist-clouds of the marshes, that the gabble of the squaws and the cries of the papposes have here echoed in the hollow woods, and that here the "Indian warrior has wooed his dusky mate" in his own peculiar and disgusting fashion!

If all things be, then, as I have herein surmised, there is certainly something resembling an early *human* history connected with this spot, although, as the reader may gather from what is here written, it is not of a character to render the present owner of this territory vainglorious. I entertain rather more respect for the still earlier inhabitants here, viz: the fish (for undoubtedly at a very early day all my flat land, *at least*, was covered with water which was filled with aquatic life, both vegetable and animal), beavers (particularly), bears, deer, elks, etc. (for these were a sober and honest citizenhood!) than I do for those featherless bipeds whom Longfellow, Cooper, and certain other chaps, more poetical, or romantic, than practical, have been at such pains to glorify.

Now I should grieve to have the reader believe from what I have herein written that I do not admire the *Song of Hiawatha* and the *Leatherstocking Tales*, for I do. I can repeat hundreds of verses of the poem, which I have read with delight several times. *That* was one way of treating a subject. Crabbe and Ebenezer Elliott have taught the world another. Theirs, *mutatis mutandis* (there, that's Latin! and first-rate Latin, too!), would be my way of treating the Indian,—the plain, *severe* method. I should be much in favor of this *severe method* of dealing with the red brethren in every instance.\* Don't know what I mean? Well, let's have an illustration: read this

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\*After you have perused my "poem" which, confessedly, closely resembles that celebrated effusion of MARK TWAIN's in the same meter,

## SONG OF LO, THE SWARTHY.

Ye who've read the pretty stories,  
Told in flowing verse, concerning  
Hiawatha, Minnehaha,  
And the ancient Arrow-Maker,  
Of the land of the Dakotas,—  
Who believe the dainty fiction  
Written by the Cambridge poet  
Paints the naked savage truly,—  
Read, for little have I written,  
Read the little I've here written,  
Read the song of Lo, the Swarthy!

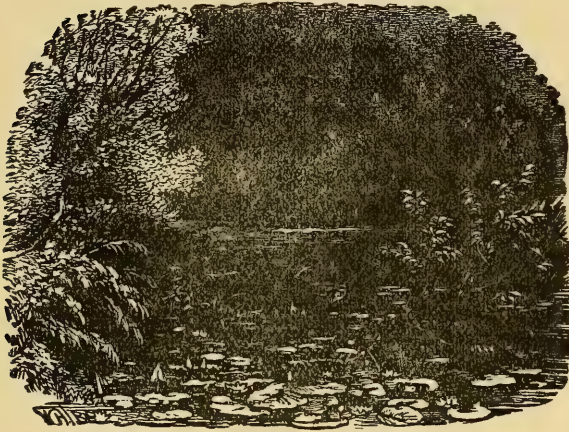
Should you ask me whence these stories,  
Whence these legends and traditions  
With the odor of the forest,  
And of other smells suggestive,—  
Whence these savage scenes dramatic,—  
I should answer, I should tell you,  
(I should be obliged to tell you!)  
I repeat them as I've seen 'em  
By the savages enacted,—  
Paint the Indian as I know him;  
I depend not upon hearsay,  
Nor on second-hand traditions.  
Looking close, have I failed ever,  
Ever made a signal failure  
In an Indian to discover  
Aught poetic or romantic.

---

wherein, for his father's benefit, he had turned the dry phraseology of a deed into "poetry"—and, it may be added, was duly clubbed for his pains by his unappreciative male parent—you will doubtless admit that if the general government had early adopted my method of dealing with the "Indian Question", trouble with its copper-colored wards would long since have ceased. The wards, aforesaid, could not have stood it, you see, and would have faded away—slowly, it may be, but surely!



I might further go, to finish  
 This my lengthy introduction,  
 Give my sanction to the saying  
 Of a certain candid red-man :  
 "No good Indian 'cept dead Indian !"  
 At the doorway of her wigwam,  
 Made of poles and bark of basswood,



Standing in the ample shadow  
 Cast by elm-trees large and spreading,  
 On the right bank of a river  
 In the land of the Ojibwas,  
 Sat an ancient squaw, Demoyah,  
 Dusky, grim, unprepossessing :  
 Restless, deep-set eyes, dark, shining,  
 Peered into th' adjacent forest ;  
 Face broad, hair coal-black, coarse, wiry,—  
 Features these of this old woman,—  
 Uglier than the Medusa,  
 Uglier than pen or pencil—  
 Goethe's, Milton's, or Doré's — e'er  
 Painted Phorkyad, Sin, or Gorgon !  
 From her eyes a light uncanny  
 Like a lambent flame played round her.



What if dainty city dweller,—  
Tender-footed, superstitious,—  
Loitering in rural places  
Idly during warm vacation,  
In a forest after twilight,  
Suddenly in lonely valley,  
‘Chanced t’ encounter such weird creature?  
Would she not to him appear there  
‘Grislier than any specter  
By imagination morbid  
‘On a sad sick-bed up-conjured?  
Smoking sat the low-browed creature,  
Idly, listlessly, sat smoking,  
Waiting for her husband’s coming.

This dark dame a print dress sported,  
Begged last New Year from a lady  
Living in a distant village;  
‘On her shoulders, though not chilly,  
Bright day this in glad September,  
Wore she proudly as she sat there  
At her solitary doorway,—  
Proudly, consciously, she wore it,—  
‘Oft the pipe from lips removing,  
So to gaze upon it better,  
Pausing oft to gaze upon it,  
All its colored stripes admiring,—  
Fragment of an old rag carpet,  
Picked up in some farmer’s door-yard,—  
Soiled, and stained, and dim and dirty.  
‘On her head no covering had she,  
Barring hair like darkest midnight;  
All unclothed and bare her feet were  
Save for soil which might adhere there  
When she roved through muddy pathways  
‘Since the dews of morning laved them.  
She was thinking as she sat there

What the deuse she'd have for dinner,  
Should her good-for-nothing husband  
Fail to shoot a deer, a washkash,  
And return — 'twould be just like him —  
Bringing not so much as muskquash,  
Not so much as rat or squirrel, —  
Rat, raccoon, cat, skunk or squirrel!  
For the poor Demoyah's larder,  
Never fat, was leaner never  
Since she first 'gan wigwam-keeping  
'Than 'twas at this blessed minute!

True, she has some sturgeon's entrails  
Dried and laid away for winter, —  
But not much; then there's a deer-skin  
Which she long has used for mattress,  
'On a pinch she that can eat, too!

Through her thoughts she heard a footstep,  
Heard a rustling in the bushes,  
Soon with glowing cheek and forehead,  
With — his head upon his shoulders,  
'(That was all, you may believe me,  
'Gun and ragged shirt excepted),  
Leisurely from out the woodland,  
By three starveling dogs close followed,  
Lo, the Swarthy, stalked before her.  
'Slow he moved with gait unsteady,  
Dull his sunken eyes and bloodshot,  
'Gone his powder-horn and shot-pouch,  
Labored was his breath and foetid:  
Ugh! the wretched Nish-e-naw-ba,  
'Wretched, thriftless, hopeless sinner!  
'Much firewater, skoo-da-wah-boo,  
'Much bad skoo-da-wah-boo, whiskey,  
At a white-man's bar had purchased, —  
'Bartered there his horn and shot-pouch,  
'For a pint of skoo-da-wah-boo!

Poisonous as juice of hemlock !  
Such vile stuff as wicked pale-face  
Brews from alcohol, tobacco,  
Brews from drugs and herbs unwholesome,  
Brews to sell to his red brother,—  
Villainous, destructive compound !  
This the thirsty, thriftless red-man  
Purchased with his horn and shot-pouch,  
Then when eager he received it  
Drank it off without once winking,  
Drank it off, nor paused for breathing.  
Many hours the thirsty Indian  
Near the white-man's lodge had lingered :  
Begged for whiskey, and received it,  
When no more 'twas freely given,  
Leaped, and ran, and sang for whiskey,  
Thus amusing pale-faced loungers,—  
Till with such poor pastime weary  
From the place they ruthless drove him,—  
Drove him sheer, despite reluctance,  
Threats and bluster, and remonstrance,—  
Drove him past the village bound'ry,  
Forced him thence to seek his wigwam,  
Which he, reeling, empty-handed,  
Pretty drunk, but very hungry,  
Squibbee, drunk, but famished nearly,  
Reached at length, as we have witnessed.

But as he had homeward zigzagged  
Through the forests old and noble,  
That bright day in glad September,  
While the songsters round him carolled,  
While the birds sang in the thickets,  
Konked in air, or piped in streamlet,  
To his mind this was their burden :  
Sang the bluebird, the opeechee,  
Sang the robin, the owassai,

The blue heron, the shah-shuh-gah,  
 Mahng, the loon, the wild goose, wa-wa,—  
 On the wing the clamorous wa-wa,—  
 Coo-coo-witch, the owlet, chanted,  
 Chetowaik the plover sang it :  
 “Happy are you, oh, De-mo-yah !  
 Happy are you, dusky woman !  
 Having such a man to love you,—  
 Having such a noble husband !  
 Heap gen-e-be-naw, big Indian !  
 Whoop ! brave Indian, Nish-e-naw-ba !”

When the reeling, worthless Indian,  
 From the forest forth appearing,  
 Paused in front of squaw and doorway,  
 Paused without a word, and lingered,  
 Straight the ancient dame, De-mo-yah,  
 Looked up gravely, then ceased smoking,  
 Looked up gravely, nothing uttered ;  
 For these dusky forest ladies  
 Do not scold their worthless husbands,  
 Waste not lengthy curtain lectures  
 On their lazy, thriftless spouses  
 As do ladies more enlightened.  
 But the quiet woman travelled  
 Fast as her flat feet could move her  
 To the casket where the conserve  
 Made of entrails of the sturgeon  
 Rested in the farthest corner  
 Of the rude and mossy wigwam.  
 Spake she then to her dark husband,  
 Calling him to come to dinner,  
 Telling him that dinner waited :  
 “Wee-wip ! marchon !” come to dinner !

Now behold those hungry natives,  
 Filthy, thriftless, famished natives !  
 Entrails dried of the huge sturgeon,—

Scanty fare and doubtful dainty,—  
Quick those entrails dried demolish!\*

Much could I add to my story,  
Many curious things could tell you,  
Showing how these boastful beings,—  
Drunken, cowardly, dishonest,  
Dirty, unambitious Indians,—  
Fail to answer to the standard  
Set by gen'rous, sanguine people,  
Who still dream of "noble red-men".  
But my labor would be wasted,—  
Wasted all my time and paper,—  
Ink, and time, and paper wasted,—  
Truth has not the charm of fiction;†

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\*A friend, to whom I had read the MS. of this parody, offered the criticism that he believed I was herein too severe upon poor *Lo*,—that, although there are many red-men and red women who would answer well enough the description given of the hero and heroine of my poem, there are some others not quite so utterly forlorn and hopeless in their good-for-nothingness. I replied to my friendly critic thus: "I don't write poetry often; I publish very seldom. This is probably the only public characterization of the aborigine, as I have seen him, the world will ever have; and while I have desired to make the likeness faithful, in every particular, I have also endeavored to make it a *striking* one." Then, to illustrate my position, I gave the details of an actual occurrence, which has never been in print, but which in my humble opinion is quite good enough to publish:

An Oakland county, Michigan, father, dying, the bereaved family made preparations for a solemn and impressive funeral scene by purchasing or borrowing sable suits, trimmings, etc. One son of the deceased person bought some three or four yards of wide, black ribbon, and giving it one turn about his hat, allowed the ends to hang loose down behind. His elder brother remonstrated with him, telling him that it was neither fashionable nor becoming to sport so extensive a hat-band at a funeral. The mentor was silenced, however, by the following exclamation, drawled out by the ribbon-bedecked youth: "Might as well put it all on, Harry; *father don't die every day!*"

†One will recall the anecdote of Ben Jonson and his friend Sylvester, which I do not care to relate here. If the above is not *poetry*, it is at least *truth*, which is far better, though not one-half so pretty.

But, you growl, I esteem just as highly the poor, ignorant, and bib-



Law exists not to compel you,—  
(Mercy 'twas in legislators!)  
Hence should I a lengthy poem,  
Epic poem, long and ornate,  
Filled with truth to overflowing,  
Giving all the facts in detail,  
Write, full well am I persuaded  
Not a single soul would read it!

---

ulous savage as I do the wretched pale-face who “putteth the bottle to him and maketh him drunken also.” Well, an that will comfort you at all, so do I—and ten times more!



## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XXVIII.



"Thus be these good yoemen gone to the woods  
As light as leaf on lynde;  
They laugh and be merrie in their mood,  
Their enemies are far behind."

*Ballad of Adam Bell.*

"Was there a man dismayed?  
Not though the soldiers knew some one had blundered."

TENNYSON: *Charge of the Light Brigade.*

"And if ye pedagogue be smalle  
When to ye bataille ledde,  
In such a plighte God sende hym mighte  
To break ye rogue his hedde."

J. G. SAXE.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

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ELL, it probably pleased the children, at least; and we must make some exertion to gratify them — the imps — the darlings — even if in so doing we shall chance to incur the displeasure of certain of the old folks. To tell the truth, too, I did much better in my first attempt than I had ever expected to do! 'Twas a pretty good story, indeed, — and, oh, so true! It took so well, moreover, that I have quite made up my mind to hazard a second essay :

“ Know I'll try, an' guess I'll win,  
An' so here goes for hit 'em ag'in! ”\*

Then again, you see, there are certain characteristics of “men and women I have met” in the back-woods that are worth setting down for the amusement and instruction of myself and others, both now, while this sort of thing may be studied, — and the faithfulness of my pen-pictures verified by a comparison with the subjects who sat, — and in the future; for changes are rapidly taking place, and many things which have been matters of daily experience upon

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\*Holmes.

our borders—in our settlements, lumber-camps, hunters' lodges—will soon have passed away forever! I have mingled with these pioneers, lumbermen, huntsmen,—have sympathized with, loved and studied 'em, and speak of that only "which I have seen", and "testify of that which I do know".

While penciling out this sketch memory has called up in review multitudes of apparitions,—personages with whom the writer's acquaintance long since ceased. The story completed, and the writer sitting alone in his little study,

"Linking fancy unto fancy,"

long processions of shadowy figures have filed athwart his mental vista: Lithe, graceful forms of young girls, stalwart woodsmen, slouching, grotesque figures, bronzed visages, pale and pathetic faces of suffering women, love-lit eyes, frowning brows, smiles, tears, stormy grief, hilarious joy!

"Again returned the scenes of youth,  
Of confident, undoubting truth;  
Again his soul he interchanged  
With friends whose hearts were long estranged  
They came, in dim procession led,  
The cold, the faithful, and the dead.\*

The scenes and incidents described have been—are—realities to the author, and he desires the reader to feel that what is said about Ned Ross and Becky, his wife, Pal and the rest of them, and their adventures, is real history and biography—for that they are! Should you then demand of me to know who is this schoolmaster,

"I should answer, I should tell you"

that once upon a time did the writer hereof himself

"Rule a district school,"

in the far backwoods, during several successive seasons.

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\*SCOTT.

## A 'RUPTION OF BARBARIANS: A BACKWOODS SKETCH.

“And when music arose with its voluptuous swell  
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,  
And all went merry as a marriage bell:—  
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!  
Did ye not hear it?”

BYRON.

The scene opens in one of the numerous rude, flat, log-ribbed, and forest-environed lumber-camps in the northern pineries of the lower peninsula of Michigan. Two men are seated upon the lengthy “deacon-seat” that extends along upon one side of the centrally located and wide fire-place. One of these individuals is our old friend, the long, slim, thin-featured, light-eyed, freckle-faced, ugly Ned Ross, and his companion, a burly, rough-hewn specimen of the genus camp-man, who is clad in the ordinary winter garb of the lumbermen, is Tom Brodie, the “boss” or foreman of the camp. Ned is just in from the settlement, and is in quest of Jose, the fiddler, whom he wishes to engage to furnish music for a little dancing party to be shortly given at a settler’s cabin some ten or twelve miles down the river. Jose himself is a settler—one of the hugest of the settlers, by the way—and is at present the only one of them who works at the camp. In making his inquiries for the musician Ned had incautiously divulged the object of his mission here, and his companion was now all agog to win an “invite” to the merry-making.

“Didn’t they send for the rest of us boys, Ned?” he demanded.

The messenger perceived at once that he had been guilty of a bad blunder (sometimes worse than a crime!) and he set his wits to work to develop means to correct it.

“Not by me they didn’t,” was his ungrammatical but perfectly truthful reply.

“But ain’t they goin’ to!” persisted Tom.



"That I don't know," replied Ned laconically. Then he added, "I s'pose yes,—if they want ye!"

This didn't appear to help the matter any with the brawny lumberman. He grew very red in the face and pretty soon burst out angrily:

"Ain't we shanty fellows good enough to dance with you moss-backs?"

"Oh, yes; good enough, I guess," returned Ned very coolly, "but that hain't the thing, ye see. The gals down there don't know ye, an' then there'll be three or four boys to every lady, anyhow, an' the house hain't any bigger 'n a peck measure."

"Tell ye what, Sorrel-top," said Tom with a ferocious frown and a very determined air, "you jest tell 'em for me down there that they'd better send up an invite for all the boys here, for we got wind of this thing some time ago an' have talked it over an' intend to come down to that dance anyway, an' if we ain't treated 'bout right there 's goin' to be trouble for somebody. We don't mean to be slighted all the time as we have been this winter so fur."

"What!" exclaimed Ross, "would ye rush your drive in there where ye wa'n't wanted, in that style, and brow-beat, and abuse innercent wimmin-folks?"

"You bet we'll be there, asked or not," asserted Tom, "so'f you want peace and good treatment you'd better hev 'em send up the invite."

"Now see here, ole feller," said Ned, squaring around so as to look his dark-browed companion full in the face, "Becky (that's my wife) ull be there, an' I don't want her insulted. I shell be there, an' shell be door-keeper. I don't purpose thet anybody shell git inter thet house thet hain't wanted there. You'll hev a big crew, but there'll be some good boys at *my* back, too. I'm good fer you, Tom, an' about two more, an'——"

"Haw! haw! haw!" interrupted Tom's coarse laugh.

"Wal, ye can haw-haw if ye want ter," cried Ned, "but

Tom, ef I see your ugly mug poking syrup—syrip—stitionously inter thet cabin door the night o' the dance, by the great smoke-stack! it'll be a darned sight uglier'n 'tis now when it goes out!"

"Don't, Neddy, you might scare a feller," said Tom, who appeared to have no notion of engaging in a preliminary skirmish at this time; "but," he continued, "you jest tell 'em when you git down to the forks of the stream what you've heard, an' maybe they'll think better on't and send along the invite."

"I don't hardly think they will," sneered Ned, "I don't think you're the sort o' animils they want, anyhow." Ross was red-headed and thin-skinned, and further consideration of Tom's threat had failed to smoothe the temper ruffled by the first hearing thereof.

But Ned, at Tom's request, stopped to dinner at the camp, saw Jose aside, and obtained a promise of the latter that he would be on hand with his violin upon the evening of the party; then the messenger mounted his horse and rode slowly down the snowy "tote-road" which wound now through dense growths of pine and hemlock, and anon ran across openings known as barrens, now followed closely the bank of the frozen stream, and again plunged deeper into the woods, in an obvious effort to shorten the distance by cutting directly across territory where the river went far around, and within a couple of hours he was again at the settlement and had related to several of the boys, whom he had called together at Pal's hostelry, the substance of the conversation which, as a special privilege, the reader has been permitted to overhear.

"Sho! there won't be any trouble," exclaimed mountainous, good-humored Pal.

"'You cahn't sometimes, most alrus tell,'" quoted Sam., the State o' Mainer, with much earnestness; "I wouldn't warrant that gang o' Canadians to do the decent thing at any time. I'll jest bet my boots thet they've gone an' done the

very thing Tom Brodie told Neddy they'd done, an' they mean to come down an' run the drive through."

"There's a slew uv 'em up there," observed Pal, the publican; "ef they come down in force they'll make you think there's another 'ruption of Goths and Vandals." Pal was quite an attentive student of history about these days, and liked occasionally to exhibit by his conversation his familiarity with that branch of learning.

"'Rruption' is a good word, I guess," calmly commented the sorrel-top, "though I, for one, don't begin to know what it siggerfies; but no doubt it's all right or Pal wouldn't spout it. But let the ghosts an'—an' the other fellers '*rupt*', ef they want ter,—we've got to be there in shape to perfect the wimmen-folks, anyhow."

"That's even so," said Sam. with decision; "I like your grit, Neddy, an' I know you won't fail us when the pinch comes."

"Ef I do——!" said Ned.

"Ned 'll be 'bout climbin' out the winder with his wife on his back *jest before* the pinch comes," observed Hank Silver, slyly.

"I ken lick any man thet thinks so!" howled Ned, quaking with rage, and tearing himself loose from his outer wrappings in remarkable time.

"Tut, tut, Ned!" cried Pal, rushing forward and seizing that irate individual about the shoulders and holding him by his immense strength as in a vise. "Don't git mad at Hank," the publican resumed, "he wuz only jokin'."

"Thet's all, Ned, ole feller," said Hank, who had been visibly disturbed by Ross' hostile demonstrations, and was anxious to mollify him now; "shake hands," he added.

"All right, then," said Ned, in a more friendly tone, and extending his fin, "but you teched me in a tender spot, an' ef I thought you meant it I'd whale you so quick you wouldn't hev time to—to suffer!"

"Why, Neddy! what makes you so blood-thirsty to-

day?" exclaimed the man from the pine-tree state; "never saw you half so furs afore!"

"Wal, boys, I'm 'shamed of myself, an' thet's a fac," replied Ned sheepishly; "but it reely seemed, jest fer the minute, thet ole Hank there wus on the side o' them ghosts an'—an' t'other fellers that Pal spoke of; then I thought o' little Becky, an' their comin' there to scare 'er, an' I jest wanted ter eat somebody up!" and the benedict turned and walked off in an agitated manner in the direction of his own homestead.

As time passed on, however, it came generally to be believed among the settlers that the lumberman's threat had been mere bravado, and when Jose came down the morning previous to the party and reported that although the boys of the camp,—who, by the way, were mostly Canadian Frenchmen, of the kind usually found in the lumberwoods, rough men and ignorant to the last degree,—were greatly incensed because, as they alleged, they had been *slighted*, still there was little or no cause for apprehending an "irruption of the barbarians". Only one thing, as Jose thought, would bring that event about. If the supply teams—or "tote teams" as they are always called in the woods—arrived at the camp that afternoon from the base of supplies below, and should happen among the other "provisions" to bring a few gallons of whiskey, as sometimes had been known to be the case, trouble of the kind that had been apprehended might arise. But the teams not being expected until the day following, it was not at all probable that an attack would be made, as the requisite courage on the part of the lumbermen, which the liquor alone could furnish, would be lacking.

Thus it befell that the young as well as such of the middle-aged people of the settlement as still occasionally indulged in the innocent diversion of dancing, gathered at Chris. James' cabin upon the evening selected for the party without having made any preparation for war, offensive or

defensive, and with little or no fear of any unpleasant interruption of their sport. All the belles and beaux of the border were of the company, and the latter, when complete, consisted of some ten or twelve matrons, young ladies, and misses, and about a score of gentlemen, young and *older*. Ned and his lady were present, Mr. and Mrs. Pal, Sam., Hank Silver, and various others whom it will not be necessary to introduce specially. The fair Ellen Strickland, though she seldom danced, had consented to accompany the schoolmaster to the place of merry-making the present evening, and it was observed here as on former occasions that she and Mrs. Ross, or Becky, as all the neighbors called her, were on terms of sisterly intimacy. There must be something in these Rosses, I thought, or so sensible a girl as Ellen would not set so much by them.

Little useless ceremony was observed at the cabin. All were well acquainted with one another and on familiar footing, and hence there was no need of formal introductions. No tedious delays were tolerated, either. It was at once

“On with the dance; let joy be unconfined,”

and very soon

“The mirth and fun grew fast and furious.”

The space allotted to the dancers was, it is true, “cabinéd, cribbed, confined”, and this despite the fact that it comprehended the entire ground-floor (and indeed this was all the floor there was) of the cabin, excepting a very limited portion occupied by a bed (in one corner), the stove (which was snuggled against the wall), and a narrow space by the rear wall where the non-combatants and the musician sat. One thing is certain, the dancers made the very most of the advantages they possessed, and no thought of grumbling at their narrow limits or rough, unwaxed floor, appeared to enter their minds.

“All went merry as a marriage bell”



for hours, and every fear of anything like an intrusion of unwelcome guests from the distant camp had long since been dismissed and forgotten, when suddenly, Ned, who had stepped outside the door for a few moments to take the air after a half-hour's vigorous exercise in a reel, came rushing back with standing hair and staring eyes, and announced in tones that well served to show the intense excitement he was laboring under:

"Boys, they're comin'!"

"Who's comin'?" demanded Pal in a voice that, quivering a little with emotion, evinced that he had divined the cause of Ned's unusual agitation.

"The Goulds an'—an' the Vanderbilts!" cried poor Ned, who was confounding things badly under this great stress.

There was a smothered, shuddering sort of a laugh on the part of one or two who perceived Ned's error and its origin, but Pal kindly corrected him: "The Goths and Vandals, Neddy means," he said, "and I'll bet old Tom Brodie, drunk as a lord, is at the head of 'em."

"Where are they?"

"Who told you?"

"What's to be done?"

These questions and half a hundred others, amid much excitement and no little joking and laughter, some of the latter of the semi-hysterical kind, showed that there were a variety of ways of looking at this "coming event" which had thus "cast its shadow before", from the present distance.

"Pal's chore-boy jest rode up here like mad, an' told me that Brodie's crew, more'n thirty of 'em, an' drunker'n owls, jest passed the tarvern an' wuz comin' out this way with blood in their eyes, swearin' to tear the roof off the shanty, and whale every man to death that sassed 'em, or interfered with 'em."

Ned told this off rapidly and in a voice that trembled with excitement.

"Boys!" spoke now the calm, manly voice of Pal, "we must put things in condition for defence. Ned, you keep that door."

"I'm there!" was the prompt response of the slim gentleman addressed, from his post.

"Sam., you, an' Chris., an' the rest o' the boys, back Ned up if he needs it, an' see that the ladies are taken care of," commanded our leader; "the school-master an' I will step out an' see what we can do talkin' to them fellers," he added.

As I started to follow the manly publican out of doors I felt a slight pressure upon my arm. I turned and my eyes met the dark, expressive ones of Miss Strickland, and I saw something therein which thrilled me like an electric shock, flattered me, and nerved me mightily throughout the trying scenes of the next thirty minutes. "She is apprehensive for my safety; she cares for me!" I thought.

I should here speak of the remarkable behavior of the ladies of the company generally. The coolness and courage they displayed, and the good sense they exhibited from the beginning to the end of the turbulent scenes that were enacted upon that little theater during the ensuing half-hour, appeared to me worthy of all praise. There was little or no weeping or wringing of hands, no outcries, nor insane supplications to be taken home, nor lamentations that they had come. A belief in the impracticability of a sudden exodus at this juncture seemed to be unanimous, and the righteousness of making as good a defense as possible against this invading crew of semi-civilized and drunken ruffians, who were known to be approaching by the only road that afforded egress from this nook in a vast forest, seemed to be affirmed by a general, if tacit, agreement.

I followed Pal to the door with little idea of the part that was expected of me, and as little faith in the utility of any sort of "palaver" with the hostile crew now marching down upon us. I believed from the first bringing of the news of

the approach of the enemy, as Patrick Henry is said once upon a time to have expressed himself, that "we must fight!" that "an appeal to arms was all that was left us!" But I quickly placed myself by the side of our huge champion, and was abreast of him at the moment he confronted the advance guard of the foe, which proved to be no other than the redoubtable Brodie himself, drunk enough to be reckless, and looking easily a dangerous customer.

I detained the man a moment and began to discourse concerning the lawless character of such expeditions as the present he and those men, his companions, were upon, but he merely replied, "Young feller, don't you know there's no law in the bush?" and attempted to push on. Little parley was he disposed to make with either of us, and, followed pretty closely by his grim and unkempt crew, he dodged past Pal and rushed toward the door.

"Keep out of that!" commanded Pal, but the command was unheeded by the lumbermen.

I caught at the unbuttoned collar of Brodie's coarse, flannel over-shirt as he was passing me, and experienced the satisfaction of tearing that to the waist, but did little to check his progress toward the cabin. He shook me off roughly and growled, "Stand back, schoolmaster; I don't want to hurt you, but don't interfere with me!"

His formidable gang close at his heels, he rushed for the door of the little cabin, and it was a neck-and-neck race between the foreman, Pal and me to see who should first enter. I, slight but active, enjoyed the advantage of leaning upon my companion's enormous strength, or I might have been crushed down and trampled to death in the jam. Ned opened the door slightly in an endeavor to admit his friends; Brodie's grim features filled the upper portion of the aperture thus made. "Get out of the way, you scantling," he bawled contemptuously at Ned, "or I'll break you in two!" Then Ned's stuff showed. "I don't break easy," he retorted, and I saw a long, slim arm withdrawn, a red, bony fist was

at the end thereof; it came back like a flash of "chain-lightning," and the fist-end took effect full upon the flushed face of the burly Tom. The latter, howling with pain and rage, fell backward into the arms of his companions. Pal and I, taking advantage of the momentary confusion occasioned by this unexpected and surprising incident, slipped inside and attempted to close the door. We were not successful in this last maneuver. The doorway was full of fierce, brutal faces, the owners whereof paused there an instant from lack of leadership. Brodie soon rallied, and with loud oaths started again to rush into the dwelling.

It was one of the most exciting scenes I ever witnessed. The women, with pale faces and dilated eyes, had shrunk close to the rear wall of the room, and helplessly watched the proceedings, with what interest in the result of the struggle may be imagined; the boys, with the single exception of the fiddler, whom at this juncture I noted as missing, and whose absence, as I now remember, somewhat puzzled me, were standing manfully up to the work in hand, and appeared determined to defend the citadel at any cost, although at this time probably no one guessed how far the drunken fury of the camp-men would carry them. Now, indeed, did more than one of us regret that we had not taken warning by the threat that had been made and reported to us, and provided ourselves with more effective means of defense. The presentation by a firm hand of a brace of good revolvers, as I figured it, would have been an effectual answer to the demand of the lumbermen for admission to that cabin. As it was there did not appear to be a single firearm in possession of either party.

It requires tedious time to describe events which transpired there with marvelous quickness. At the re-appearance of Brodie a rush was made by the assailants *en masse* for the interior of the dwelling, and the fight became hot about the entrance. Again the leader of the invaders received a setback from the fist of Ned Ross. I saw two camp-men go to

the floor like weak children beneath as many blows administered by the heavy hand of our leader. Poor Hank Silver received a cuff from a brawny Frenchman which "tried his metal", while it damaged his looks, and meanwhile I had found opportunity to get in a stroke or two at the foe, which, however, were rather disappointing in their results, as my men wouldn't "down" like those whom Pal dealt with. By this time probably one-half the camp-men had succeeded in effecting an entrance into the dwelling, and the direst confusion reigned in the confined space within. Ned and Pal still stood yeomanly at the door, and the "harrying crew" without had learned that every attempt to re-enforce their companions within would cost them dear.

It appeared at length that a new scheme for forcing an entrance had been hit upon by the hostile band outside the walls. Three stalwart camp-men rushed in upon Pal at once and clinched with him, and wrestled with and tugged at the giant with all their might, striving not so much to prostrate him as to shove him back from the entrance. In this maneuver they were completely successful, and the moment his place was vacant at the doorway three or four others from the exterior rushed upon Ned and bore him struggling to the floor. The entire force of lumbermen still in fighting condition was soon in the cabin, and our boys were pushed back to the rear. Several of the brave fellows were already badly hurt; a number of the camp-men were still clinging to the arms, legs, neck and hair of Pal, rendering him helpless for the time; I had made an attempt to assist Ned, and had run my face against something hard—very hard, in fact—a Frenchman's fist it was, and I had marked its owner for vengeance, but for the present I had retired, not in the best of order, and (quite involuntarily) taken a seat upon the floor in the corner of the room to study the new constellation of stars which all-suddenly had burst upon my view! Sam. was down in the close, warm, but not tender, embrace of a muscular young Frenchman.



Ned was being pummeled with huge fists about the head and strangled with murderous fingers: it looked dark, very dark for us, and I had almost given up the battle as lost!

But relief came; and from a quarter whence none of us could have anticipated it. Just at that identical moment, when it really seemed as though no earthly power could help us, a voice — a woman's voice — was heard to ring out clear and distinct above the din. It was the voice of Ned's wife, Becky, and it said: "LOOSE YOUR HOLD THERE, QUICK, OR YOU DIE!"

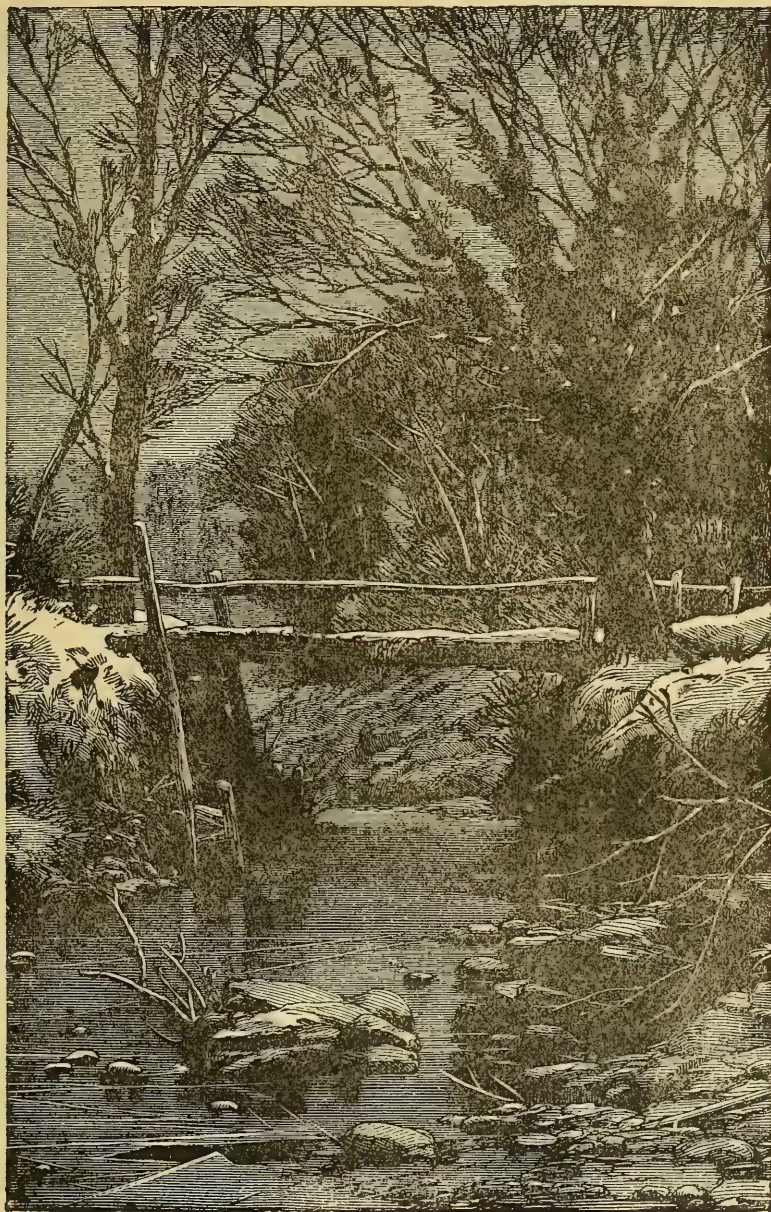
I was on my feet and at the side of the heroine in a breath. There stood she,—her cheeks aflame, her eyes emitting sparks of fire; she held a cocked revolver in either hand, and these deadly weapons were directed full at the heads of her husband's principal assailants. Consternation appeared to seize the foe: our little band was electrified. The threatened men and their helpers fell back as if already they felt the cold lead in their flesh. Ned rose to his feet the moment the murderous hands were loosed, he paused not an instant, his eye had rolled over the scene as he got up, and he cried out with a loud voice, albeit one made husky by the choking he had received:

"Now's the time, boys! CHARGE 'EM!"

Immediately the swingle-like movement of his arms recommenced, and camp-men began to fall around him as decayed trees fall about the path of a cyclone. Pal, too, was loose, and now thoroughly aroused, raged like a lion amidst his prey. Hank, Sam., Chris., and the other boys "were up and at 'em", hewing away at the foe like Byron's sturdy old Turk at Ismail,

"Like doctors of divinity"

in polemics, and as for myself, obtaining a view of the ugly phiz of the wretch whose fist had marred my personal beauty, I contrived to give him such a salute with the heavy part of a three-footed stool as rendered him useless for any purpose for the remainder of that evening at least.



We soon cleared the cabin of the miserable wretches and ran them far down the road, over the rude bridge spanning a creek that crossed the latter, and on toward the river, many of them begging for that mercy which none merited, and, to tell the truth, few obtained. We then returned to the cabin to count the cost of our victory. Hardly a man of our gallant little crew had escaped without severe bruises, and some even had rather serious wounds. The "dress suits" of several of the beaux were in a sorry condition indeed. But as no one was dangerously injured, and as we were all cared for, petted, and praised by the poor, pale, nervous, but still pitious women, who, after all, had been the real sufferers in this affair, we made very light of our injuries, and one gaily chaffed another concerning his personal appearance. We all hailed Becky as our deliverer, and the little heroine received our compliments as modestly as she had borne herself bravely in performing the feat which had earned them.

If ever I saw adoration in man's eye turned upon woman, I saw it that night in Ned's when, after the trouble was over, the *debris* cleared away and all wounds had been washed and dressed, he dragged his negligent length along and reclined like a great noble hound (aye, he looked noble to me then with all his ugliness!), at his wife's feet as she was seated on a low bench by the aide of the stove, rested his arm across her lap, and looked up into her face. Bless her sweet face and brave heart! I loved her at that moment, too, almost as much as did Ned. But there was one closer to my side whom I loved still better!

The fun of the whole thing was our finding that great, over-grown coward, Jose, the fiddler, after the *melee*, under the bed and fast asleep! The question was started by someone, "Shall we not have another cotillion ere we go home?"

"But where's the music?" another asked.

"That's so," exclaimed a third, "what has ever become of Jose, anyhow?"

"He never went out at that door," asserted Ned.



"He couldn't have fled by the window,—'tis too small," laughed another.

"He must be under the floor,—or the bed," observed Sam.

And sure enough, it was under the bed we found him. There he, unperceived in the terrible excitement, had sought refuge at the beginning of the fight, there he remained until a peace had been conquered, when he was ashamed to come out, and there he had finally fallen into a sweet slumber. He was ridiculed and "run upon" unmercifully once we had him out, and had naught to say for himself, only that he didn't want to quarrel with the boys of the camp where he worked, which was thought to be a very poor explanation to offer to these his neighbors, whom he had so basely deserted in the hour of their direst distress. However, he stated that he would furnish all the music required, and make no charge for his night's services (!) providing his action should be overlooked, and in the exuberance of our joy anent our handsome victory over the camp-men, gained without his aid, we concluded we could afford to be magnanimous. Considering, also, that Jose's business was fiddling, not fighting, and, moreover, experiencing a feeling of pity—albeit the feeling had a large admixture of contempt—for the poltroonery of the huge fellow, which he could not help, perhaps, we voted, amidst much laughter and chaffing, to accept the terms he proffered, to forgive him, and to say no more about it.

Ned inquired archly of Becky why she had not revealed to him her possession of the revolvers at an earlier moment. "Why, Neddy," cried the little woman, with great earnestness, "I was afraid you would want to use them, and I wouldn't have you shoot and kill a man for the whole world!"

"Would you have used them if the men hadn't let Ned go?" inquired Hank.

"Oh, I am glad I didn't have to," exclaimed the little heroine, while tears glistened in her bright eyes.

We learned sometime later that the "tote teams" had arrived at Brodie's camp, with the whisky as a portion of their lading, about the middle of the afternoon of the eventful day of which I write, and that soon after the work for the day was done, the camp-men, thirty-two in number, first imbibing, three or four times around, of the infernal juice, had hitched up a couple of horse-teams, and taking the rest of the liquor with them, had driven to an old building which stood upon the right bank of the creek, a short distance below the bridge above mentioned, and within a couple of miles of the James cabin, where they had left their animals, and whence they had pushed on afoot. It was well for them at last that their sleighs were so convenient, for several of the wretches had been so badly treated by the "moss-backs" that it was with much difficulty that they walked at all.

I also learned, upon inquiry, that, although Pal had not believed the lumbermen at Brodie's camp (with all of whom he was well acquainted from being the keeper of the only hostelry in the place) would be reckless and wicked enough to attempt any assault upon the citizens in the manner we have seen, he had taken the precaution to leave his faithful night-boy on watch, and thus it was that we received our warning of the enemy's approach. It is also true that the boy had experienced some difficulty in passing the camp-men in the narrow, snow-bound forest-road, and only succeeded in getting the start of them when they had left the thoroughfare to seek the old building where they desired to leave their animals.


No prosecutions against the lumbermen on account of this outrageous assault were ever instituted by the settlers; and I was thus persuaded that Brodie's boast that "there was no law in the bush", had some foundation in fact.



I was acquainted in this border district a number of seasons after that in which occurred the events recorded in this chapter, but I never heard of a second settlers' party there being interfered with by the lumbermen. Threats of such a thing were made, it is true, but the fame of Ned and Pal and Hank and Sam. and Chris. had spread far and wide, and no crew of camp-men was found near that settlement afterward which possessed such a thirst for glory as to care to put the powers of the boys to the test.



## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XXIX.



"An age tyrannically regulated with reference to the manufacturer, the merchant, the financier, the politician, and the day-workman."

WALT WHITMAN: *On Death of Longfellow.*

"Teach thy tongue to say, I do not know,"  
*The Talmud.*



## CHAPTER XXIX.

IN reflection, I deem I owe the reader an apology for the cavalier manner in which, in a foregoing chapter, I allowed myself to refer to the romantic literature of the English and other tongues. I do not desire to lay myself open either to the charge of being a vandal, or of wanting taste. I will acknowledge, however, that I am feeling the effects of age, and of the hardening influence of business cares, of politics, of courts, of modern society! I can recall a season when fable and romance, dressed with the pleasant and piquant sauces of poetical diction, were all my mental pabulum.

Then was I a dreamer, — an innocent, ignorant, useless dreamer, — like the rest of the moon-stricken race.

That sort of merchandise has no fixed and definite value in the markets of this age and nation; and the soft-handed, soft-hearted, and soft-headed youth of this school, who finds himself floundering in the crowd which is engaged in the terribly-in-earnest struggle for life which is on-going all about, with no better theories of the management of the work in hand than are to be drawn from that which his brain has fed upon, is in a fair way either to perish miserably, or to have the larger half of his poetry and romance knocked out of him

right speedily!\* He has far other lessons now to learn; and well is it for him if he do take kindly to the new ways, and not attempt to stem the tremendous tide which is running directly counter to the course he has been steering. He must, certainly, I repeat, yield in the end and move with the current, or be overwhelmed and lost to view.

“This accursed, æsthetical, ethical age  
Has so fingered life’s horn-book, so blurred every page,  
That the glad old romance, the gay, chivalrous story,  
With its fables of faery, and legends of glory  
Is turned to a tedious instruction.”†

But I have not entirely given over the reading of poetry. Within a few weeks I have had the *Faery Queen* in my hand on several occasions. I have glanced again, once or twice, at the *Canterbury Tales* the current week. And upon my table at this moment lies the *Faust*,—in fact, I have just been reading how that sly, slim and slippery old character, Mephistopheles, in the lowest deep of gloom discovered the Phorkyads, those triplet sisters of ugliness, who have but one eye and a single tooth among them! Think what a poor “setting-up for house-keeping” that is! Methinks these are the sort of people I should like the critics of my book to spring from. Couldn’t see very well,—nor bite!

The poet Moore assures us that the great *Fadladeen* was “a judge of everything”: I write this chapter in order to inform the reader wherein I differ from *Fadladeen*. I am not a critic of anything. In the line of poesy I only know what suits my taste, and commonly do not pause to inquire wherefore I am pleased. And I find also that what delighted me yesterday may possibly disgust me to-day.

If, after the above preamble, I might presume to venture a little objection to Gtœhe’s master-piece, it would be that he

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\*“The age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded.”—EDMUND BURKE: *French Revolution*.

†OWEN MEREDITH: *Lucile*.

has employed too great an amount of machinery therein, so that whether or not he was at all times clear as to the meaning of every part himself, he has at least succeeded in bewildering his readers and tormenting his comentators.

An observation of the author is upon record to the effect that he had carried *Faust* in his brain for thirty years, and "until it had become all pure gold". There is quite a proportion thereof which, so far as the meaning is concerned, is already dross to many of his most careful students,—and these don't confess all their misgivings either!\*

But Goethe and Bailey (and the English poet, I observe, has been receiving some good words of late, too) both teach one very encouraging doctrine, and that is the superiority of a manly man to all the forces of the pit combined. For this I thank them! I long have held something of the same theory, but I couldn't have begun to work it out so prettily!

Yes, I still *write* a little verse, now and then. Don't take much pride in it any more. Used to feel a little spiteful toward the world because it so persistently refused to recognize the beauty of my "effusions." Have lost that feeling absolutely, and now do not experience even an emotion of mild wonderment when one of the little waifs of my pen, which in some manner has found its way into the "poet's corner" of a *weakly* newspaper, fails to elicit a single audible or visible comment!

I do believe, however, that it lies within the range of possibility for even me to produce a poem which would take the public by storm—and no great praise implied to the critical taste of the public, nor merit in poem or author, in the belief!

The history of literature is full of strange incidents in this line, and the reputations of poets have undergone curious vicissitudes. Poems that commanded the enthusiastic

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\*See *Notes to Taylor's Translation, Etc.*



admiration of contemporaneous readers, have been neglected, or damned by the succeeding generation. On the other hand, there are grand productions, like the immortal epic of Milton, the beauties whereof the poet's contemporaries utterly failed to recognize, and it has been left to other ages to accord them their true places in literature. Who but recalls how Jeffrey's ridicule served to prevent the sale and reading of Wordsworth's poetry for a full quarter of a century?

These things should teach us to exercise great caution in judging of the merits of fresh literary performances. I have recently devoted some time to a re-perusal of certain of the writings of the reviewers of the last age or two,—to those of Johnson, Jeffrey, Christopher North, Hunt, Hazlitt, Lamb, (if he may be classed among critics), and to Carlyle, who hammers all or most of the others. I am at length about prepared to announce a startling truth in connection with the subject in hand. It will be a novelty to all, and may prove a shock to the nerves of some; but I feel it no less my duty to make it known. It is this: There is as yet no such thing as a science of literary criticism!

There are theorists and theories; there are dogmatists and dogmas! Only one little rule of all I have read commends itself to my judgment; it is that of Coleridge, and I find its enunciation in the *Biographia Literaria*. The rule and the process by which it was developed is thus given:

“But as it was my constant reply to authorities brought against me from later poets of great name, that no authority could avail in opposition to Truth, Nature, Logic and the Laws of Universal Grammar; actuated, too, by my former passion for metaphysical investigations; I labored at a solid foundation, on which permanently to ground my opinions, in the component faculties of the human mind itself, and their comparative dignity and importance. According to the faculty or source from which the pleasure given by any

poem or passage was derived, I estimated the merit of such poem or passage. As the result of all my reading and meditation, I abstracted two critical aphorisms, deeming them to comprise the conditions and criteria, of poetic style;—first, that not the poem which we have read, but that to which we return with the greatest pleasure, possesses the genuine power, and claims the name of essential poetry;—secondly, that whatever lines can be translated into other words of the same language, without diminution of their significance, either in sense or association, or in any worthy feeling, are so far vicious in their diction. Be it however observed, that I excluded from the list of worthy feelings, the pleasure derived from mere novelty in the reader, and the desire of exciting wonderment at his powers in the author.”\*

Carlyle complains of the “Puseyism and thin moonshine”† of Coleridge. None of these qualities observable in *that* extract!

Tried by this standard the greatest poem in the world for me (after my own) is the *Paradise Lost*. And judging from the fact that the author of our canon himself has shown quite a partiality for the

“God-gifted organ-voice of England”‡

and quotes him with approval hardly less frequently than he similarly honors Wordsworth, *and even himself*, in the work from which we take the above extract—and, in short, *passim*—I should judge that the application of the rule produced like results for its author. The matter is one worth thinking about.

In the chapter from which we have quoted, Coleridge has a remark or two concerning the rhymed couplet. I am pleased to know that so eminent an authority in these mat-

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\**Biog. Lit.*, Chap. I.

†*Reminiscences*.

‡TENNYSON.

ters as is our learned author, holds opinions upon this subject which I, imbibing from a different source, have long entertained. In fact, although it is a little singular that it should be so, for I have been in the habit of the frequent reading of Coleridge's prose and verse since boyhood, I had never become aware of what his views specifically were regarding this matter until my observations thereon contained in the after-part of this chapter had been put in writing. I propose not here to quote further from the "Logician, Metaphysician, Bard" \* or to *argue* the question at all.

I desire to speak just one little word regarding the relative beauties of the distich and what has been called the *enjambment*.† I do not believe the critics have settled this question so that it will *stay settled*. Edmund Waller‡ is said to be the poet who demonstrated the superiority of the method which in the rhymed heroic concludes the sense with the couplet and the rhyme. The case of this poet, we may observe in passing, affords a striking illustration of the fate of the first class of writers above mentioned, viz: those who were tremendously popular in their own day and generation, and later have met with lasting neglect and oblivion. Dryden§ followed Waller, and improved upon his method, which he took occasion to commend. And I have to remark right here, that if all who have employed the distich had been able to make so noble a use of the same as this wonderful man, it would have left me little to say against the fashion. But so far is this from being the case, that it has long been an open question whether or not the next great writer who loved the rhymed couplet, viz: Alexander Pope, wrote *poetry* at all! That he produced *something* very admirable in its way, is beyond all doubt,—but is it poetry in the true sense of the term?

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\*LAMB'S *Characterization of Coleridge*.

†Webster is guiltless of the word.

‡Born 1605; died 1687.

§Born 1631; died 1700.

Now the rule I should announce is this: Rhymed and unrhymed heroic verse, the first distinction aside, should be measured by the *same* standard throughout. Anything short of this and you must make the essential features of the work — the *soul*, if I may so speak — conform to the accidental — the *body*; you must sacrifice the substance to preserve the shadow. We can conceive of such a thing as a *Paradise Lost* in rhymed verse. But a *Paradise Lost* in distichs *à la* Waller, or Pope! Horrible incongruity!

But, I repeat, I am ignorant of the true canons of criticism. I perceive that what is meat and drink for one generation is naught to the next, and hence conclude that the science is nothing if not a progressive one,— and but little even then. I also discern dimly that

“What in the captain’s but a cholerick word,  
In the *private* is flat blasphemy!”

and hence dare not take the liberty with words and things which the giants with perfect impunity have taken.

‘What woeful stuff this madrigal would be  
In some starved, hackneyed sonneteer, or me;  
But let a lord once own the happy lines,  
How the wit brightens! how the style refines!\*

It has been pointed out, for instance, that Milton mistook the form of the Italian word which stands as the name of one of the most delightful of his minor poems, and nobody has been bold enough to insist upon it to this day, nor to intimate that it happened through the great bard’s ignorance of the tongue. I only speak of the matter here by way of illustration of the subject in hand, and, to point the moral, as it were, attempted to be taught in another chapter of this book, viz: To avoid the use of foreign or dead languages in English books, where our noble vernacular affords terms equally expressive,

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\* POPE: *Essay on Criticism*.

though you may have the gift of tongues in a degree equaling that of the Learned Blacksmith, Sir William Jones, or even the great Cardinal Mezzofanti\* himself!

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Reader, this (without being so designated) must be taken as a sort of *inter-chapter*. Do you know what an inter-chapter is? No! Well, example thereof is given in *The Doctor, &c.*, which see. It bears little relation to anything that precedes or follows it in the book. It contains a few thoughts which had accumulated, and of which I desired to rid myself.† A late biographer of Thoreau remarks of *Walden* "that it contains much that might as well have been written anywhere else" as at W. Well, of this chapter it may be said that it contains a great deal that might just as well have been written elsewhere as within the little library at Oakfields; by another as by a farmer; or, perhaps, that it might just as well have been left unwritten altogether! But it is only brief, and hence you lose but little of time if you read it, and only a trifle of space if you skip it. "You pay your money and take your choice!"

But \* \* after all \* \* \* \* "it makes nothing," as the Germans say.

\* \* \* \* \*

How little either pertinent or coherent is found written

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\* It is said he could read and compose in upward of *seventy* different languages.

† And MONTAIGNE: "There is no pleasure to me without communication. There is not so much as a sprightly thought comes into my mind that it does not grieve me to think I have produced it alone, and that I have no one to tell it to."—*Essays*, Book III, Chap. IX.

He also quotes his favorite SENECA upon the subject: "If wisdom was conferred with this proviso, that I must keep it to myself and not communicate it to others, I would have none of it."—*Epist.* 6.



\* \* in any book \* \* produced in these latter days.  
 \* \* "A mad world, my masters!"\* \*

It is indeed doubtful \* \* whether—in strict reality—

\* \* \* \* \*

there be *any single sane man extant*. \* I am *light* to you.  
 \* \* \* And you are a *raving maniac* to me (in your last  
 pamphlet, leader or review article).

*Read between the lines* this chapter \* \* \* is as good  
 —and as sound, perchance—as another. \* Prove your  
 kindness, \* not sanity, \* by attempting such a reading  
 hereof.



## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XXX.

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"Shall I sonnet-sing you about myself?  
Do I live in a house you would like to see?"

ROBERT BROWNING.

"First on the green I'd have a low, broad house!"

LEIGH HUNT.

"Taste, and feeling, and thought, and experience, and knowledge of this life's concerns, are all indispensable to the delights the imagination experiences in beholding a beautiful bona fide cottage. \* \* \* It must be the dwelling of the poor."

*Recreations of Christopher North.*



## CHAPTER XXX.

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HERE are in the old books of husbandry divers strange plans for farm-houses, with outhouses and accompanying conveniences ; all with more or less to commend them. Many modern works contain new schemes for farm dwellings, with improved appointments and a greater multitude of details. There are in each and every plan offered for a rural establishment certain excellent features with others not so good. Whenever the time shall arrive—and it is yet far in the future—that the human brain contrives and the human hand constructs a farm-house with all its necessary belongings, embodying all the good and avoiding all the bad elements suggested, then, and not till then, shall we have the perfect rural home.

This domicile Beecher would term “the model house,” and he gives us, in the *Star Papers* some hints as to the manner in which such houses are produced :

“But then [he says] a large house ought to have great diversity ; some rooms should have ceilings higher than others ; doors should come upon you in unexpected places ;

little cosy rooms should surprise you in every direction. Where you expected a cupboard there should be a little confidential entry-way. Where the door seems to open into the yard you should discover a sweet little nest that happened into the plan as bright thoughts now and then shine into the soul. All sorts of closets and queer cupboards should by degrees be found out."

All of which is very pretty indeed,—and very indefinite.

But brother Beecher continues his observations, and, kind reader, please commit to memory what follows from his pen, for it is not only excellent in itself, but it will be useful to you in forming your judgment of my farm-house when you come to the place, further along, where I give a description and detailed account thereof, and its building. Mr. Beecher says:

"Now such a house never sprang full grown from an architect's brain as did the fabled deity from Jupiter's head. It must grow. Each room must have been needed for a long time, and come into being with a decided character impressed upon them [it]. They [it] will have been aimed at some real want, and meeting it will take their [its] subtle air and character from it."\*

All the above excepting only the grammatical construction, which is confessedly a trifle lame, we take to be truly orthodox teaching.

Now, my house is not a large house, nor a costly, nor a fine house; and very possibly it resembles the ideal structure existing in the great preacher's mind at the time he penned the paragraphs above quoted, in but a single respect: it was evolved,—it grew! With this solitary exception it is, I believe, unique—like unto nothing that ever was on land or sea, in heaven or earth! It may be to the "cold eye of criticism" my farm-house is no less ugly than odd; but the

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\**Star Papers.*

image thereof that is cast upon the retina of my own partial eye\* is picturesque and beautiful.†

On an earlier page of his book the Plymouth pastor had spoken as follows:

"But a genuine house, an original house, a house that expresses the builder's inward idea of life in its social and domestic aspects, cannot be planned for him, nor can he all at once sit down and plan it. It must be a result of his own growth. It must first be wanted,—each room and each nook. But as we come to ourselves little by little, and gradually, so a house should either be built by successive additions, or it should be built when we are old enough to put together the accumulated ideas of our life. \* \* \* The best way to build, therefore, [Beecher still goes on] is to build as trees grow, season by season; all after-branches should grow symmetrically with older ones. In this way, too, one may secure that mazy diversity, that most unlooked for intricacy in a dwelling which pleases the eye, or ought to please it if it be trained in the absolute school of nature, and which few could ever invent at once and on purpose."

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\*"It is a law of all healthy mind that what is one's own has an attraction for one's self far beyond that possessed by much finer things which belong to another. A man with a little country abode may have more real delight in it than a duke in his wide demesnes. Indeed, I heartily pity a duke with half a score of fine houses. He can never have a *home feeling* in any one of them. While the possessor of a few acres knows every corner and every tree and shrub in his little realm."—BOYD'S *Recreations of a Country Parson*.

†I use these terms advisedly. DEQUINCEY defines the picturesque to be "the characteristic pushed to excess". That definition fits my case. EMERSON cites MÖLLER to prove that the building which is fitted accurately to answer the purpose for which it was designed would turn out to be beautiful, though beauty had not been aimed at. The same doctrine is clearly taught in DEQUINCEY's observations upon the Dalesmen's cottages in the lake region of England. See DEQ.'s *Essays*. That this was the theory of SOCRATES is shown by XENOPHON in his *Memorabilia*. It is also the doctrine taught by ALLISON, JEFFREY and other British writers.



"My house a cottage more  
Than palace, and should fitted be  
For all my use, no luxury."

That was Cowley's idea. Cowley was a poet. Another poet, and no mean one, and he an essayist, also, alive at every pore, Christopher North Wilson hight, in one instance takes a contrary view.

"Have you any intention, dear reader, [says Kit] of building a house in the country? If you have, pray for your own sake and ours, let it not be a cottage."\*

But that the above was mere sportiveness on the part of the bluff and hearty old pedestrian† is proved by remarks of his further along in his essay, and in particular do we desire to quote against him one of his sentences which says: "It does my heart good to look upon a cottage".

Mr. Beecher, in writing of his worshipped farm at Lenox, speaks of his "farm-house that is to be". "For," says he, "we have resolved that it shall be a farm-house and not a mansion."‡

The taste of the author of this book and the length and avoirdupois of his purse corresponded and conspired to determine that his country home should also "be a farm-house and not a mansion"; if, indeed, it were not more correctly described as a cottage. It has the "low-browed look" which, as the author of the pleasant *Edgewood* books asserts, "belongs to country dwellings,"§ only one portion having a second floor, and that just affording space for two small bed-rooms, which are lighted respectively by a little window, one looking westward, and the other, like a half-shut eye, squinting toward the east. Humble sleeping apartments are these, but pleasant, despite their low walls and narrow floors.

The rooms described are in the low second story of the oldest part of my house — the upright, technically so called,

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\*PROF. WILSON: *Essay, Cottages*.

†"Poet we may not be, but pedestrian we are."—WILSON: *Essay, The Moors*.

‡*Star Papers: Essay, Gone to the Country*. §*My Farm of Edgewood*.

the nucleus of the whole structure — which, since it was so far completed as to serve for the accommodation of a sizable family of pioneers, has been buttressed on every side with “wings” and “lean-tos” — the latter skirted on the northern and western sides by a low veranda — until, of a verity, it would be difficult from most points of view, save for the difference in height, for the stranger’s eye to determine what portion of the fabric is limb and what body.

A strange jumble of buildings it has become by the successive accretions of years; and when my present plans with regard to the house are quite consummated the *tout-ensemble* promises to be something still more odd and *outré*.

I am not, at best, a great stickler for conventionalism, either in building or living, and would prefer that my house should possess a marked individuality than that it should have been constructed, at much greater expense, after the most approved models of the Grecian or Gothic schools of architecture. Though, perchance, inferior in many respects to most men, I would not consent to be changed myself, nor would I study a model, so as to become precisely like any other man that exists, or ever existed, however exalted that personage may be, or have been; nor would I, so long as my home affords the comfort and conveniences I crave, consent to sacrifice its originality in an exchange for walls and pillars of marble and interior trappings of gilt. It is the great Bacon who says:

“Houses are built to live in and not to look on; therefore let use be preferred before uniformity, except where both may be had. Leave the goodly fabrics of households for beauty only, to the enchanted palaces of the poets, who build them with small cost.”\*

Resuming the descriptive vein, I would say that, in its original form, that portion of my dwelling first built, the core, as it were, of the whole, had three rooms on its first floor, to-wit: The front or eastern room, a moderate sized

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\**Essays, Household Edition*, p. 164.

affair, designed to be used temporarily for the general purpose of kitchen, dining- and sitting-room; a small bed-room in the north-western, and a buttery in the south-western corners, with a straight stairway slanting upward toward the evening sun, between the two.

This upright, composed of undressed lumber for the most part, was hastily erected in the months of October and November, A. D. 1877, and occupied on the sixth of the latter month, when but little more than half completed, still unplastered, and as innocent of paint as a healthy country maiden.

The succeeding summer the south wing was added, with roof running at right angles to that of the upright, and containing rooms designed for a permanent dining-room, a bed-room, a bath-room and a clothes press.

The following year an addition with the gables "in the same directions looking" as those of the upright, and abutting upon the latter at the west end, was built. This wing contained the above-ground cellar with hollow brick-walls and double windows, and a narrow ante-room thereto with floor two steps lower than that of the buttery with which it communicated: this last is called the cheese-room. The floor of the cellar is three steps below that of the room last described.

Some three years after the cellar was completed further progress was made upon the house, and the structure began to assume a form probably destined to be somewhat permanent. Another western wing — a long, low and narrow structure — was added. This abutted upon the south wing, and is, in point of height, nearly equal thereto. It runs parallel to the cellar-wing, and is separated therefrom by a narrow space (we call it a court — and the reader may so term it if he choose — to lend it that dignity the builders failed to give it) which permits the lighting of the various rooms thereabout through windows opening thereinto. This last addition contains three rooms in a row, viz: kitchen, wash-room, and bee-shop.

During the same season we also constructed a lean-to running across the northern side and eastern end of the "upright," and a re-arrangement of the interior so altered the appearance of things that an early occupant of the original shell might now easily be persuaded that nothing thereof remains. One end and a portion of one side of the wall of the old front room were removed by the carpenters, a partition was put in, a hall, with glass doors at either extremity, runs through the body and the lean-to from north to south, and the original north-western bed-room is enlarged by the width of the addition there. As stated above, a low veranda skirts the northern and eastern sides of the lean-to. The roofs of the two last having the same slope, and both being rather flat, an odd appearance is given to the building thereby. Perhaps the first thought that would suggest itself to a whimsical mind on viewing the house from a point north or east,—the steeper roof of the main portion surmounting the flat, shingled roof of the addition, and the latter bordered by the white-painted board-roof of the veranda,—would be of a chubby school-girl, decked out in a dingy apron with a stiff-starched, broad, white frill!

A bay-window stands out, like an after-thought — which it was not — upon the southern end of the lean-to.

All the work upon the house is as plain as the habit of a Quaker matron.

Other wings and lean-tos are in contemplation; but I reserve a discussion of them for another chapter, or, possibly, for another volume. I have also taken occasion to speak more in detail of a particular room of the farm-house in other portions of this book.

In the meantime my "home-stead" stands,

"Cosy as nest of bird inside,  
Here is no room for show or pride,  
And the open door swings free and wide!"\*

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\*PHEBE CAREY.

## MOTTO FOR CHAPTER XXXI.



“Consider what you have in the smallest chosen library. A company of the wisest and wittiest men that could be picked out of all civilized countries, in a thousand years, have set in best order the results of their best learning and wisdom. The men themselves were hid and inaccessible, solitary, impatient of interruption, fenced by etiquette; but the thought which they did not uncover to their bosom friends is here written out in transparent words to us, the strangers of another age.”

EMERSON.





## CHAPTER XXXI.

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THE library to which I have been wont to make those occasional excursions, notice of which is duly served upon the reader in the sub-title to this work, is situated in the north-east corner of the farm-house at Oakfields.

It is a small room ; but what of that ? Beecher it is who asserts that "a philosopher is not measured by the size of the room in which he writes," a remark giving utterance to a truth to which, I entertain no doubt, every reader of these pages will assent.

The room is not quite ten feet square, and has a low ceiling. It is lighted by two fair-sized windows, one looking toward the north-star which stands directly over the large barn from this point of observation, and the other letting in the full glory of the rising sun, whenever that luminary rises in glory. The low veranda on the eastern and northern sides of the dwelling makes an awning for both windows.

To me the room is a pleasant one. It commands a pretty good view of my possessions to the east and north, save where skirts of woods intervene. From the eastern window we may see all that territory lying between the dwelling and

the state-road three-fourths of a mile distant. This road at present forms the boundary of the farm on that side. From this window also we may view, besides various other objects, the little skirt of woods on the south-western border of the east eighty, and the small grove near the entrance from the state-road to the private way upon the farm. The large oak tree in the field long known as the "twenty-acre lot" (the same being a part of the east eighty) stands nearly due east from this window and is distant some five hundred yards.

The north window looks out upon the pleasant lawn in front of the house, and the major part of the live forest still standing upon the northern portion of my domain is in line with the observer's eye directed from this point. There are shade trees — maple, Lombardy poplar, etc. — standing within the yard and near these windows, and altogether, although the country is still new and bears a wild aspect, the outlook far and near is rather agreeable than otherwise.

Within the room, at the present writing, are two large black-walnut book-cases with glass doors, two open book-racks, a round table, side shelves, etc., all laden with books which will aggregate something like one thousand volumes. The large book-cases occupy the north-western and south-eastern corners respectively, a sofa stands across the eastern window, the northern side holds one book-rack, the south-western corner another, a large globe stands near the door, bound volumes of newspapers and magazines lean lovingly against sofa, book-case and window-seat, a handsome Webster's Unabridged lies open on the center-table, Worcester's large dictionary is at hand in a patent wire-holder, some microscopes and other optical instruments, a pruning-knife, a pocket compass, rule, etc., lie upon a little shelf which ornaments the northern wall, glass jars — in one of which is a huge spider and in another a little snake, both in alcohol — stand on another shelf, a newspaper-rack, well filled, and a picture or two hang on the eastern wall of the room,



A PICTURE ON MY WALL.

while portraits of the master and mistress of Oakfields, with a small case of lepidopterous specimens, occupy the northern wall.

As may well be imagined, but little space remains in the library for the writer, and, fortunately, he needs but little.

"In the close precincts of a dusty [a slander] room  
That owes few losses to the lazy broom, [a downright malicious  
libel!]

There sits the man! \* \* \*

Scribbling away at what may chance to seem

An idler's musing, or a dreamer's dream."\*

In Horace Greeley's *Recollections*, it will be remembered, the author states that he had, besides his regular farm-house at Chappaqua, "a cottage in the woods". Of this he speaks as follows:

"It is still my house, where my books remain, where I mean to garner my treasures, and wherein I propose to be 'at home' to my friends at stated seasons, and 'not at home' to anyone when I address myself to work, and especially to the consummation of a yet unaired literary project. But these are dreams."

I have to confess that I have never half admired Mr. Greeley's arrangement regarding his literary work-shop. For my part, although I often desire to be, and insist upon being "left alone in my glory" when I have literary work to do, I do not want to be so isolated from the family as I must be in a separate building remote from the dwelling. The time is, frequently, when I like to invite in company from the ladies' rooms; and seldom, indeed, do I have a visitation from that part of the house when it is not heartily welcome.

Neither am I so much of a recluse, I think, as was Southey, who, although his richly furnished library occupied a room in his beautiful home of Greta Hall, near Keswick,

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\*J. G. SAXE.



appears almost to have entombed himself alive therein, and, notwithstanding that social disposition of his, to have had time for very little society, domestic or other. This at least is the impression made upon me by my readings upon the subject. Does not the tone of the following stanza, written by that prolific poet and voluminous historian, seem to bear me out in this opinion?

"My days among the dead are passed;  
Around me I behold,  
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,  
The mighty minds of old;  
My never failing friends are they,  
With whom I converse day by day."

There's something to me cold and clammy about these verses,—the first in particular. I shouldn't think of using them to describe my sojournings in my own library. Whittier's lines are much more to my taste:

"What lack of goodly company,  
When masters of the ancient lyre  
Obey my call and trace for me  
Their words of mingled love and fire?  
I talk with Bacon, grave and wise;  
I read the world with Pascal's eyes;  
And priest and sage, with solemn brow austere,  
And poets, garland-bound, the lords of thought draw near."

It is certain, also, that the study of the Quaker poet is a very pleasant, home-like place, as it could not fail of being, cheered by his kindly and venerable presence.

Montaigne in his essays gives very interesting accounts of his own work-shop, which was situated in the stately dwelling upon the patrimonial estate of Montaigne. I introduce here the talented, vivacious, but shockingly indolent old Gascon for the purpose of quoting a pleasant paragraph from one of the papers I have mentioned. Speaking of his study, the gossiping essayist says:

"'Tis there I am in my own kingdom, and there I endeavor to make myself an absolute monarch, and to seques-



ter this one corner from all society, whether conjugal, filial, or social; elsewhere I have verbal authority only, and of a confused essence.”\*

That word “endeavor”, which I have marked above in italics, has always amused me. We learn from other portions of M. Montaigne’s works the significance of the phrase “confused essence” as applied to his authority about home. I may add, from what I glean from his own works concerning the personal habits of this entertaining writer, that, in my humble opinion, if he had been left entirely alone to manage his own apartments, the “essence” of order therein would also have shortly become slightly “confused”.

But be all the matters last foregoing as they may (we will not quarrel about them), here am I in my own kingdom; and whether it be an absolute or only a limited monarchy, I will not take the time to inquire. Being most happy and proud to occupy this goodly throne, and to exercise the prerogatives that are indubitably mine in this realm, I feel little disposed to jealousy about names. Indeed here is *imperio in imperium*, and I govern both; for do I not boast—have I not often boasted in the language of the old poet:

“My mind to me a kingdom is”?

And why? Because

“Such perfect joy therein I find,  
That it excels all other bliss  
That God or nature hath assigned;  
Though most I want what most would have,  
Still doth my mind forbid to crave.”†

Now I do most humbly, and with a truly contrite spirit, entreat the kind pardon of the long-suffering reader for these flights, these antics! What business have I to fly off thus at a tangent on every slight provocation with my everlasting *poetical extracts*? Don’t blame you, reader, for growing

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\*MONTAIGNE: *Essays*, Chap. III of Book III, HAZLITT’S Trans.

†BYRD.

to hate me. I will promise better conduct for the future. I really had determined some time ago to have done with these boyish tricks, and am surprised at myself that I have so soon broken my resolution. But I have stopped all that *now* for a finality. I will behave *much* better in future,—in the words of *Topsy*, “’deed I will!”

But, as I was about remarking, here I sit in my library—in point of size, in fact, an insignificant room—one of the most so in the farm-house; but—to me the kernel of the whole nut,—the treasure-house of the whole establishment,—yea, the capitol of the whole realm of Oakfields,—the center of the world,—of the solar system,—of the universe! Here I sit, as I was saying, and put the finishing touch to this, the thirty-first chapter of *the book*.



## MOTTO FOR CHAPTER XXXII.

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Dear Anna,—between friend and friend,  
Prose answers every common end ;  
Serves, in a plain and homely way,  
T' express th' occurrence of the day ;  
Our health, the weather, and the news,  
What walks we take, what books we choose,  
And all the floating thoughts we find  
Upon the surface of the mind.  
But when a poet takes the pen,  
Far more alive than other men,  
He feels a gentle tingling come  
Down to his finger and his thumb,  
Derived from Nature's noblest part  
The center of a glowing heart.  
And this is what the world, which knows  
No flights above the pitch of prose,  
His more sublime vagaries slighting,  
Denominates the 'itch for writing'."

COWPER.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

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THE attentive reader will remember certain remarks in a preceding chapter concerning my brother Horace, in the course of which the writer took occasion to commend in warm terms the great complaisance with which that gentleman has been accustomed to listen to the reading of the rhymes produced from time to time by me. I think I also stated in that place that my good brother was, at one period of his life, himself devoted to the muses. I know not whether I made an explicit promise to sometime furnish the reader of this book with a sample of the poetical effusions of this modern Horace; but think I did not. However, lest some might have misunderstood me, and would hence feel disappointed and aggrieved if I should not again recur to the subject, I have determined to exhibit a single specimen in order that such may understand what these poetical "scintillations" were like. This specimen follows.

I think it was entitled

## BUCOLICS.

“The sun is setting o’er the woods there,  
 All crimson ’tis, and hence,  
 It looks, ’fore all the world, like my old rooster,  
 Setting on the fence.

“The clouds are strung along horizon — tally,  
 They’re reddish and bluish, whence  
 They do resemble my last winter’s flannels,  
 Hanging on the fence.

“The pale moon I see out in the east there,—  
 A great hole in the sky! and thence  
 My mind wanders back to where the geese there.  
 Pass through a hole in the fence.

“I now conclude my little ditty;  
 No doubt you’ll allow it has sense;  
 If it don’t beat Drummond ’tis a pity!  
 I hope there’s no offence.”

I used to tell Horace that he ought to polish his rhymes more carefully; but he was a little *touchy*, and was apt to reply:

“Oh, darn the polish! they’re good enough without. ’Nough sight better’n yours, anyhow. Why don’t you fix up your own some way?”

Of course, after such a rebuff, the like of which I should never have received from my gentle brother in conversation upon any other topic whatever, for poets are easily piqued by having aught of an unfriendly character hinted concerning the children of their brain, I did not generally pursue the subject further. But on the whole and at this distance, I am inclined to subscribe to my brother’s view of the matter. Taking the poem quoted, for instance, I don’t believe any



amount of *polishing* would improve it. 'Tis a "little gem" as it stands.

Hem! a-hem! I once;—that is to say, I composed a little poetical epistle to Horace shortly after I took up my residence at the farm, and what I have written and cited in the present chapter to this point has only been designed to lead up (gradually, and, as it were, by easy stages) to that. It will be here entitled

## THE MORNING WALK.

My brother Horace, whom full well  
I love, I have't in mind to tell  
Thee of my pleasant past'ral life,  
Since I from journalistic strife  
Withdrew, and in these smiling fields  
Have proved the sweets seclusion yields;  
With peace, with books, and tranquil thought,  
And thousand joys which can't be bought,  
Or found in "busy haunts of men",—  
Domestic bliss, my goose-quill pen,  
(As doth become the farmer), used  
For pastime, not for bread abused!  
'Twere long with all at once t' acquaint thee,  
This time a morning walk I'll paint thee.

Me picture, Horace, starting out  
Clad in my "homespun frock",  
With coarse *et ceteras*, with stout  
And heavy boots my feet decked out,  
I' the morn at four o'clock.  
Oh, view me gay as any missel,\*  
Or bob-o-link o' the meadow,  
Steer for the woods, with merry whistle,—  
The woods still fraught with shadow!

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\*A European song thrush of lively disposition.

For tardy Sol hath not as yet  
Peeped forth with jolly eye;  
The bright green grass with dew is wet,  
And scarce e'en are the sweet stars set  
In yon gray western sky!  
"What seek'st thou?" What I lost in town!  
"How find it here? and now?  
A pet dog was 't? or tame deer flown?  
Thy pony? or thy cow?"  
Nay, none of these; of worth far more;  
I'd not exchange for wealth  
(When 'tis regained), or fame, or lore;  
'Tis thus I seek my health!

How sweet the breath of this bright morn!  
How lovely is the earth!  
'Tis at this hour the Muse is born!  
That Poesy hath birth!  
For when I hear the glad birds sing,  
The bluebird, lark, and linnet,\*  
(I guess!) while all the forests ring  
With th' blackbird's notes, and everything  
With the sweet sound is echoing  
As if a soul were in it,  
Can I sit dumb, like stock or stone?  
Nay, nay! I'll join the choir!  
And thou shalt know, if thou alone,  
What hath re-strung my lyre!  
At this sweet hour my heart is filled  
With love for all God's creatures;  
For e'en the crow in yonder field,  
(Ah, well I know his features!)  
High-perched on yon tall oak agild

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\*The guess is not a random one. It is the belief of the author that the bird meant is the lesser redpoll linnet (*Aegithus linernus*).

Now with the sun's first rays; last morn  
I clubbed the black thief from my corn!  
Yea, for my man felt much good will  
When late he sought that bird to kill!  
Old crow! thou'rt not so *very* dark!  
And, if thou'lt spare my grain,  
I promise thou shalt ne'er be mark  
For my man's gun again!

But how I linger in the clearing  
Who for the forest started!  
As now the farm-yard I am nearing,  
I hear the merry-hearted  
Young lads, who there the "sweet-breathed kine"  
Of wholesome milk despoil,  
A-whistling cheerily,— good sign  
That 'tis a pleasant toil.  
I pass the door, a gentle neigh  
Saluteth from the stable,  
And from their home above the bay,  
Swift by my head, with twitters gay,  
Two little swallows flit away,  
Another, following, doth stay  
In th' door that's in the gable.  
I pass my flock of sheep (I've two—  
Two sheep, not flocks—a lamb and ewe);  
What flieth there — a plover?  
I hear the blatant calves halloo  
Behind the barn in tender clover.  
Loud crow the crested cocks; pigs squeak;  
The turkeys laugh; the peafowls shriek.  
The fowls pursue — an eager train —  
For soon they learn the ready hand  
Most apt to strew the daily grain,—  
Enough for fowls to understand!

I quit the yard and down the lane  
In winding path of cows I pass ;  
The air were fragrant here and bland  
Had not the south breeze faint  
A slight mephitic taint.

But now I view on every hand,  
I' the dew-bespangled grass  
Close-nestled, dandelions there,  
With humble heads and yellow hair ;  
Here, older, hoary grown are some ;  
Some taller there have bald become.

The pleasant path which I pursue  
Runs westerly through pastures new,  
And soon I walk among the trees ;  
Preserved for shade are those, and these  
Which closer grow and make a part  
Of yon long skirt of woods, my heart  
Is set, in some near future year,  
T' include within a park for deer.

Not unhistorical this ground ;  
For on my left, there most abound  
The graceful poplar growths, is where  
My man Bazil once met a bear !  
At least 'tis what he always said,—  
And certain 'tis he wildly fled  
The spot, with many a loud halloo,  
And looked as men in terror look,  
And faltered in his speech, and shook,—  
Behaved in short as scared men do !  
Upon the right, near yon green wood,  
Where white-barked birches thickly stood,  
Stark, stiff and ghastly, tall and slim,  
Is where George Norton broke his limb.

But, hist! in yonder elm tree green  
I saw a motion then I ween;  
Again 'tis there; ah, ha! I'll send  
A greeting; 'tis my great-eyed friend,  
The owl! he long this scene hath haunted;  
He vieweth me with eye undaunted.

I see, old friend, thine owlsh fancies  
Are much disturbed by Sol's bright glances!

He meaneth now to go; he bringeth  
His great wings up in solemn way;  
He slowly moveth; up he springeth;  
He flappeth, wheeleth, now away  
To deeper covert for the day,  
He floateth,—slow and soft away!

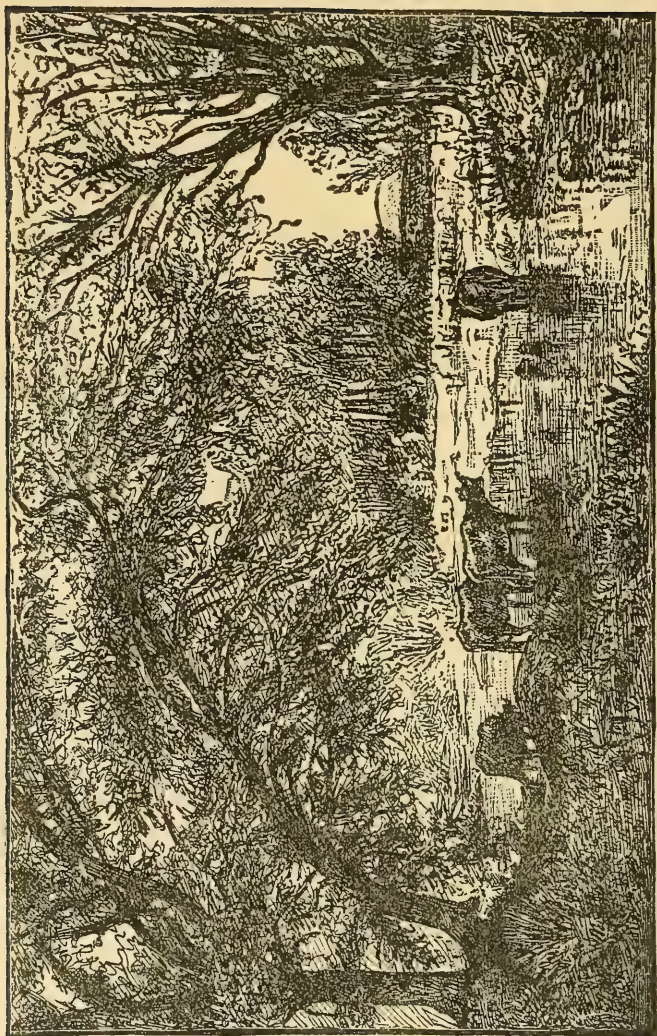
Don Redbreast on yon ancient pine  
Discourseth music very fine.  
See farther there upon the right,  
Perched on the hedge is plump "Bob White".  
In deeper woods the partridge drummeth,  
While nearer the mosquito\* hummeth.  
About, the purple phlox I see;  
Hepatica, anemone,  
And fragrant violet smile on me,  
Too damp as yet t' attract the bee.

Behind yon screen of alder bushes  
That bound the forest lane,  
A brook now gurgleth 'mong the rushes,  
Swoll'n by the last eve's rain;  
It is the Beaver-Meadow Brook,  
It vanisheth with June;  
I'll pause a moment here to look

---

\*"These are the forests' prime evil."—HORACE.





"IT IS THE BEAVER-MEADOW BROOK."

On charms I'll miss so soon !  
I set my foot and lightly leap  
The laughing, dimpling rill ;  
Now, toward the west, behold the steep  
We here name Bunker Hill !

But, ha ! a sound upon mine ear  
Sonorously doth swell !  
It drowns all other music here ;  
'Tis harsh, and yet right well  
I love it, and with merry cheer  
I greet the breakfast bell !

I turn about, with smarter pace  
The path I've trod I now retrace ;  
But find my heavy boots a weight  
That doth prevent a rapid gait.

I reach the yard and gaze abroad  
Where field of green stretch to the road  
That on the east the farm doth bound,—  
From which by private way is found  
My humble cottage in the glen,—  
Withdrawn from curious eyes of men.

The dazzling sun doth swim above  
The east in softest blue—  
Ethereal sea!—with eye of love  
He looketh down where mortals move,—  
On hill, and vale, and stream, and grove,  
And field of emerald hue.

My old black crow hath quit his tree ;  
Aye, perched upon a rail is he  
That tops the fence beyond the corn,  
Near where I found him yester-morn !  
'Tis much I fear he thither went

With a felonious intent !  
Beware old bird ! tempt not too far,  
Or we "let slip the dogs of war" !

But what hath happened to our crow ?  
What causeth him to flutter so ?  
Aha ! my friend, I plainly see  
Thou hast the king bird after thee !  
That valiant bird, which late his nest  
Hath reared near where thou took'st thy rest  
Upon the fence ; a watchman brave  
And vigilant, henceforth I'll have,  
Who'll be on duty every day,  
And help to keep thee, thief ! away !

It is a pleasant thing to see  
The little soldier harrass thee,  
Whilst thou forget'st to use thy claws,  
And duck'st thy craven head with caws !  
Attacketh he above, below,  
By flank, in rear, whilst thou dost go,  
With, heavy, flapping sable wing,  
In tortuous course to 'scape the stroke  
Of this small foe, and hurrying  
To reach thy covert in the oak !

Ah, crow ! now is thy character  
Of all good qualities deflowered !  
No more respect from me, thou cur !  
Thou'rt both a thief and coward !  
John, shoot that bird whene'er thou wilt ;\*

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\*Just ready to send this chapter to the printer, I caught up, the other day, a very sweetly written, yea, delightful volume by C. C. ABBOTT, M. D., (this year published by the HARPERS), and had only perused a few pages when I ran upon the following lines, which affected me like a merited rebuke from a superior person, viz:

"Poor crows! really useful, and to the lover of nature an unfailing source of interest, they have suffered so much and so long that it would

No longer can we doubt his guilt!  
 What can ennoble thieves and cowards?  
 "Not all the blood of all the Howards!"\*

Here endeth now my song ; and in  
 I go where breakfast doth begin !

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not be strange if they often wondered why, indeed, they were created. I have said they are useful, and I stand by the unqualified assertion. I admit their fondness for corn; I know that they love watermelons, and are excellent judges of them, always pecking a destructive hole in the choicest of the patch. What of it? The same crows have eaten grubs and young mice for ten months, and have paid thereby better prices for the corn and melons than ever farmer got from any purchaser. Frighten the crows, if you will, from the corn-fields and melon-patches, but do not kill them. This is not the whim of a crank, but the advice of a farmer."—*Upland and Meadow*, p. 52.

With a rueful remembrance, too, of including this bird in my black-list in a foregoing chapter (VIII.), after I had read the above aloud to my wife, I could only mumble in excuse of my conduct something concerning "mercy to the grubs and young mice". But, come to reflect, I never killed a crow in my life, or caused the death of one, so far as I am aware.

\*BYRON.



## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XXXIII.



“What is man? a foolish baby!  
Vainly strives, and fights, and frets;  
Demanding all, deserving nothing,—  
One small grave is what he gets!”

CARLYLE.

“Brother, I have looked on men, their insect cares and  
their giant projects,—their god-like plans and mouse-like  
occupations,—their intensely eager race after happiness.”

SCHILLER: *The Robbers*.

“How various are the inspirations  
Of different men of different stations!  
As genius points to good or evil,  
Some call the muse, some raise the devil!”

*Adapted.*

“It is the voice of the years that are gone! They  
roll before me with all their deeds!”

OSSIAN.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

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PERFECTLY hath memory preserved the picture! One day, when I was a lad perhaps a dozen years of age, I sat upon the top-rail of a high fence which ran along one side of a meadow upon my father's beautiful, though then comparatively new farm, and wondered what great work there was in the world for me to do which would render me famous — immortal! For I was an ambitious boy, emulating the spirit of young Cowley breathed in the following lines:

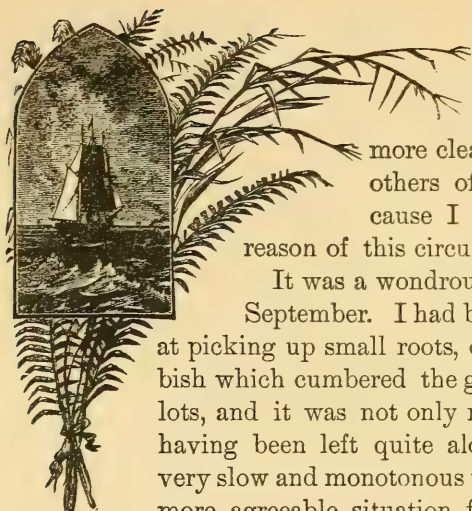
“What shall I do to be forever known,  
And make the age to come my own?”

Somehow, also, I had quite a settled belief that I should eventually find the work, and that fame, yea, and immortality, such as men find “below the moon”, would be achieved.

In the above paragraph I speak of one particular day; I care not to have it believed, however, that this was the only time I was ever visited by such thoughts during boyhood.† By no means think it! They were with me con-

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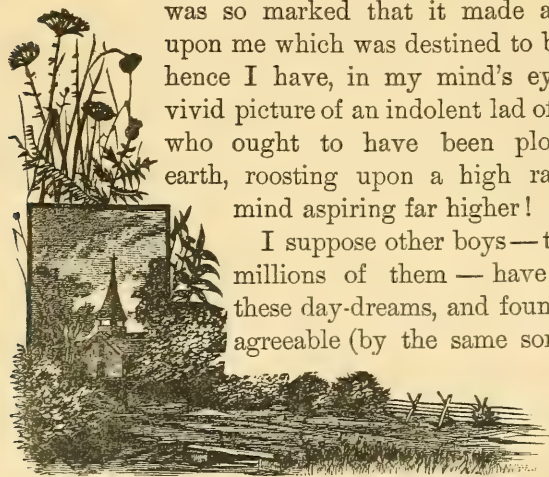
†Nor the only time that I sat on the top-rail of a fence when I ought to have been at work.



tinually. I mention this occasion especially because it stands out rather more clearly in memory than others of the kind, and because I am able to give the

reason of this circumstance.

It was a wondrously beautiful day in September. I had been set by my father at picking up small roots, chips and other rubbish which cumbered the ground in one of the lots, and it was not only rather laborious, but, having been left quite alone, I soon found it very slow and monotonous work. It was a much more agreeable situation for me a-top of the fence where I could gain a wider view of the world, feel the soft breezes fan my warm cheek, and dream uninterruptedly of the herculean labors I was one day to perform whereby I was to win undying renown! The contrast between my present every-day occupation and the glorified work of the future—between my present *actual* and my future *possible*—was so marked that it made an impression upon me which was destined to be lasting, and hence I have, in my mind's eye, Horatio, a vivid picture of an indolent lad of slight frame, who ought to have been plodding nearer earth, roosting upon a high rail-fence, with mind aspiring far higher!



I suppose other boys—thousands and millions of them—have indulged in these day-dreams, and found them vastly agreeable (by the same sort of contrast) and have surrendered themselves up to a sim-

ilar blind faith that their day-stars of glory would sometime dawn; for as Emerson well says, "A force of illusion begins life with and attends us to the end. We are coaxed, flattered and duped, from morn to eve, from birth to death."\* Such dreamers, if they have been farmer's boys, have seldom in vision seen the realization of their ambitious hopes in fields of labor allied in any manner to that of the husbandman! Nay! nay! It is in something widely different from this. It is to be a warfare where *courage*, and *strength*, and *brilliancy*, and *brain* count for something! Let those creep who will; these lads intend to soar! Certain of such youngsters, with whom the disease has developed in a mild type, soon recover, and in time become steady-going farmers, just as their fathers were. Others, more grievously afflicted, run away to the cities, and mayhap find their field of "glorious achievement" in the arena of ward politics, or behind the bar of some glittering saloon. Others, more hopelessly victimized, write for the newspapers, or go to Congress!

It is a rare thing that any of this latter class ever get back to aught like wholesome and cordial relations with the soil. Some there are, indeed, who return to the farm, *blasé*, broken-down, embittered with the disappointments incident to the unnatural sort of life they have been leading, and find there an asylum in which, bereft of ambition and hope of shining, but still dreaming of "what might have been", they may spend their few declining days; and gentle and tender old mother Earth, unresentful of past shabby treatment, kindly receives back her wayward sons, yields them support ungrudgingly while they live, and when at length with them "life's fitful fever is over", gives them a lasting resting-place in her bosom!

In justice to the writer, it should be borne in mind that, although it be admitted that he has dabbled a little in poli-

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\* *Works and Days*.

tics, and, alas! had even fallen so far at one time as to be a regular contributor to the newspapers, he was (and is) a man of strict temperance principles, and never, *never* went to Congress!

I think, on the whole, that the author of this book as a lad differed greatly from the common herd of ambitious boys. He discovered little desire for the splendid *physical* conquests which so inflamed the imaginations of his companions. He was never blood-thirsty. He was not one, not he! who had the heart

“To wade through slaughter to a throne,  
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind.”

He cared not to encounter the great dragon, nor envied the gory scout who took the scalps of a score of red men. He was not cruel, but, on the contrary, as tender and pitiful as a girl. “Many a time and oft” did he rebuke his young companions for killing harmless reptiles, and since he first understood its enunciation he has uniformly, by precept and, so far as practicable, at least, by example, enforced the humane doctrine of Wordsworth :

“Taught by what kind nature shows, and what conceals,  
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride  
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.”

But I hardly believe that he has ever been prepared to carry the principle so far that he would refuse to “count upon his list of friends, one who would needlessly set foot upon a worm”!\* which would appear still a trifle extravagant. I am quite confident, however, that even in those earlier days, when his heart was most filled with ambitious dreams and longings, if all the treasure, power and glory of a Cambyzes or a Pyrrhus, an Alexander or a Cæsar could have been won by him at so cheap a rate as the killing of a child, and a child wrapped in dusky skin, with the added condi-

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\*COWPER.



tion that no harm should come to himself on account of the homicide, here or hereafter, he would have turned with horror and loathing from the thought and cried: "Perish the wealth, the power and the fame!"

His aspirations were rather in the line of letters. He did not lust after power over men's bodies; but it was an intellectual kingdom to the throne of which he aspired. And, lest there may have been a wrong impression left upon the mind of the reader by the earlier portion of this chapter, I hasten to say, that he never at any time expressed or entertained a feeling of contempt for the profession in which he was reared. Aside from literature (but more especially *in connection with literature*), he deemed it one of the most wholesome, elevating, yea, holy of the callings by which man wins his bread. Herein again did he differ from the ordinary country-lad into whose brain the maggot of ambition has crawled; and herein throughout his career has he shown himself tolerably consistent.

Yea, let's be just to the boy. Let's "give the devil his due". There may be other struggling souls in the world which it is worth while to take a little pains not to discourage. He was not a vicious lad, nor an indolent; although his thoughtfulness and studiousness had often brought upon him the latter reproach. He thirsted after knowledge, and was early planning worthy achievement in the field of literature. He had a horror of ignorance which few about him could understand. While still quite young he was a devourer of books; and he read all obtainable printed matter till he quitted the scene of his boyish experience for a wider arena.

His means of instruction were scanty, and long, lonely nights has he sleepless passed, pondering the problem of how to enlarge them. He was poor,—poor as one can well be; and, alas! so were all those to whom he had any right to look for pecuniary assistance. He was, ere his emancipation came, at the end of the ability of the common schools



to help him, long since. He had no near friends who were qualified to give him further instruction. He was master of all the books which, in the comparatively new and unsettled region in which he lived, could be found. And—he was daily growing older! Probably never on earth will the person of whom I write meet another hour fraught with as much of heart-felt gladness as was that when, the requisite correspondence with the college authorities having taken place, the question of the qualifications, etc., of the candidate, satisfactorily settled—in his own mind, at least—he had at length won his parents' reluctant consent to his entering upon a college course! There *Christian* became eased of his burden of long years! But this consent was based on the understanding that the youth was to depend entirely upon his own resources for the wherewithal to meet the expenses of the new phase of life he contemplated trying. The condition was just and right, the circumstances of the case fairly considered, and I have never for a single moment deemed that it should have been different, how pleasant soever it might have been to have it so.

The next seven years of the life of the person whose fortunes we are here following constituted a season of close application to books, and hard labor at teaching and other work requisite to eke out the sums wherewith to meet those "quarterly bills", whose visitations are as certain to the student as taxes to the property-holder and death to all men! Poor as poverty itself; proud, in a sense, as Lucifer; self-reliant, feverish-patient, industrious, and determined to succeed,—I feel that in the history of my life during the six or seven years when I was a matriculated member of college and university, there was little at least of which the "moderate-minded" man need be ashamed! I shall be satisfied if, at the end, every page of my record shall be found as honorable to me!

But, in recording all this, let it not be thought that I desire to lay claim to honors greater than those I would

accord to others — and they are many — who have accomplished similar things. Rather let it be felt here that I speak for a class — for at my own dear *Alma Mater* were many youths whom I found engaged in the same noble warfare, and under similar disadvantageous circumstances. Some fought it through, shoulder to shoulder with the writer, and with him were mustered out. Others were in advance of him there, and there have been many later. Yearly, still, are new names of such as these entered upon the rolls of this and many other like institutions over our land. Noble soldiers are there in this cause as were ever enlisted under the banner of any! God bless the brave boys, everyone!

Moved by the thoughts to which I have above given utterance, my mind has been making a little further excursion of its own since I penciled them out. I have been musing on the scenes of those four college years! Like a moving panorama have faces and incidents passed before me.

“Where, oh, where are life’s lilies and roses,  
Nursed in the golden dawn’s smile?  
Dead as the bulrushes round little Moses,  
On the old banks of the Nile.”\*

But less and less grave has my mood become, and now

“I remember all that one  
Could wish to hold in recollection,—  
The boys, the noise, the joys, the fun,  
Though not a single conic section.”†

As matters only of yesterday do I recall them! And at last I reach the point where for me the whole play ended! The day of graduation! There we sat in a row—ten of us—the DREADED TEN! Thus sitting and waiting for the expected formal ceremony, and while the reverend gentleman, whose task it was to deliver the address, was speaking, I remember, (and others there are who will recall my

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\*HOLMES.

†SAXE.

folly) I drew upon a piece of paper the figure of Death, with the long index finger of one hand projected in the direction of a scroll upon which was marked the word "diploma", while the other hand grasped wildly at the air, and underneath I had written this adaptation from Shakespeare:

"Is this a *sheepskin* that I see before me,  
Thus handy to my hand? Come let me clutch thee!  
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still!  
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible  
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but  
A parchment of the mind, a false creation,  
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?"

It was naughty, very naughty, of me, and made some of the nervous-white boys giggle a little,—which you know they ought not to have allowed themselves to do on any account, then and there!

Well, in due course of time each man of us "clutched" his "sheepskin" and rushed out therewith into the "wide, wide world", and now often (yea, 'tis very often!) when I think of the dear, the darling boys of the old class, the "tears will unbidden start", and, in a reverie, do I seem to hear their voices, with the old-time, pleasant ring therein, chanting the *Excursion Song* which it was mine to write for them:

"Our books we now have cast aside,  
And every care with them allied,—  
And launched are we on pleasure's tide,—  
What thought have we of sorrow?"

I ask with Holmes:

"Have any old fellows got mixed with the boys?"

Then, reflecting on news received of them, almost invariably I recall the lines which Saxe wrote of his college classmates at the end of a score of years after graduation:

"Ah, me! what changes time has wrought!  
And how predictions have miscarried!  
A few have reached the goal they sought,  
And some are dead, and some are married!"



Aye, one is dead; poor fellow! and there was that in his end which makes it doubly sad to think of! And the rest—all married but two!—and those two the *quondam* “ladies’ men” (if any) of the class! Who shall account for all the freaks of fate!

But Saxe notes some items of this character in the history of his own class:

“Tom Knox who swore in such a tone  
 It fairly might be doubted whether  
 It really was himself alone,  
 Or *Nox* and *Erebus* together,  
 Has since grown quite an altered man,—  
 And, changing oaths for mild entreaty,  
 Now recommends the Christian plan  
 To savages in Otaheite.”

And, at last accounts,

"Pious Jones was dealing faro in Chicago."

While,

"Sadder still, the brilliant Hayes,  
Once honest, manly and ambitious,  
Has taken latterly to ways  
Extremely profligate and vicious;  
By slow degrees (I can't tell how)  
He reached the common groundsel;  
And figures in *Milwaukee* now  
A member of the common council."

Sitting in my little study alone at this late hour — for

"'Tis placid midnight; stars are keeping,  
Their meek and silent watch in heaven;  
Save pale recluse, for knowledge seeking,  
All mortal things to sleep are given!"\*

I gaze about at my somewhat motley collection of books, and I see here an old battered front, another there, and yonder still another, all of which are mementoes of those college days, and about each are clustered many pleasant recollections! Had those old books *phonographic power* might they not unfold some tales! Those poor, precious, old, worn volumes are more dear to this heart,—aye, ten fold—than are their spruce companions in morocco and Russia! They have a history, and it is so intertwined with my own that they seem almost a part of the *ego*. There they stand,—the old veterans!—and smile down at me through their "looped and windowed raggedness!" That one (is it You-man's *Chemistry*?) standing like a finger-board on the way, marks the completion of one-fourth of my college journey; it also indicates the point where I burst the chrysalis woven by the freshman grub and emerged in all the glory of the full-fledged sophomore insect! Lacking the wings, I was, of course, however gay, not yet quite a butterfly, and still "a little lower than the angels", but crowned sufficiently (I then believed) "with honor and glory"! Then there stands,

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\*CARLYLE, *The Moth*.



“ And holds me with his eye,”

Herschel's *Natural Philosophy*!

“ Phœbus ! what a name ! ”

for such a book !

“ Logic is logic, that's all I say ! ”\*

Well might Shakespeare demand,

“ What's in a name ? ”

Truly this

“ Rose by *any* other name would smell as sweet ! ”

Well this mis-entitled book marked the precise point where the middle of the course was reached. And then was it *Whately*? or *Wayland*? or both together? that stood at the turning post where the flower-strewn paths of the junior year were left behind, and we became

“ Potent, grave and reverend seniors ! ”

(more or less!).

Then arrived the “ last scene of all ”, which is above noted, and the coil of this pleasant life had been shuffled off forever ! Other

“ Candidates for college prizes ”†

filled our places. Class after class since then, of bright, earnest young men have completed the noble course, and reaped the advantages and honors thereof ; and others will come ; but “ never, ah, never ! ” will the “ whirligig of time ” bring it about, or the proverbial habit history has contracted of repeating itself, determine it so that within the sounding halls of my *Alma Mater* will appear another class like the famous DREADED TEN !

Hah ! yonder on the highest shelf of the book-case lies the veritable diploma, intercoiled with another received at a later

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\*HOLMES, *Old Deacon's One-horse Shay*. †BYRON.

date. Come, let me clutch thee again! Let me see what goodly thing had been done that they gave me thee. Here is the recitation:

"Mum, mum, having completed mum course of study — mum, mum — hereby conferred — mum, mum, — bachelor — etc., etc." Yes; and here the board signed, and here are the signatures — the very signatures — of those true and noble men of the faculty — a cultured, Christian gentleman, every man of them; God bless 'em! and well did they do their duty by us all! There is the president's round hand; — how well I know it,—*for he helped me at the office that last year!*

But it seems as if there was a great deal omitted from the record upon this parchment, which ought to be down.

Is there anything here of that long and dubious preliminary struggle passed through before beginning the course,— the study,— the long, long, dark nights of lonely thought,— the anguish of spirit!

No; not a word of that.

Does it speak of the hard work I had, all unassisted, to secure the means to meet the dues,— the plans, the stratagems, the overwork?

No; that is omitted.

Is there aught said here of the abject poverty which continued to afflict,— of poor thin clothing, often even shabby, and the sneers this sometimes occasioned on the part of thoughtless and more fortunate companions,— of the anxious thought of what to do next,— *of hunger even?*

No; not a word.

Nothing of all these things? And nothing of night work? Nothing of labors performed, in spite of sickness, to win a few more needed shillings? Nothing of twenty-five mile walks to save a few pennies off stage fare? Nothing off self-denials of all sorts that this course might be completed, and that I might graduate with *those boys?*

No.

Then there is but little in the diploma, after all; all the more honorable matters are omitted.

Yet it recites: "Having completed the course".

Yes; but that is what all their diplomas say. Men receive such who complete the course, indeed; but some there are who are entitled to little credit therefor, and are as little benefited thereby. But, gentlemen of the Board and Faculty, if it is the best that you could do, I will not complain, although I think you yourselves must admit that this stereotyped diploma possesses little significance as a testimonial of what has been overcome and what accomplished!

Ah, I see the name here of one who will appreciate what I have said. *He* has known poverty's curse. *He* was a youth who felt a craving for knowledge. *He*, also, knew what it was to go cold and hungry. *He* supported himself at college, and understands well *what that means*,—he told me so, with tears dimming his eyes, twenty years after the hard battle had been fought and won! And I rejoice with him that now he is receiving, in the esteem of his fellow-men, and well-earned professional renown, the reward of his manly conflicts!

But money was proffered *you* to help you along?

Well?

And you refused it?

Yes; for reasons.

Well, I can't pity you then; you could have had assistance, and were too proud to accept it when tendered.

Who the devil solicited your pity!



## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XXXIV.

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"Ah, me! what perils do environ  
The man who meddles with a siren!"

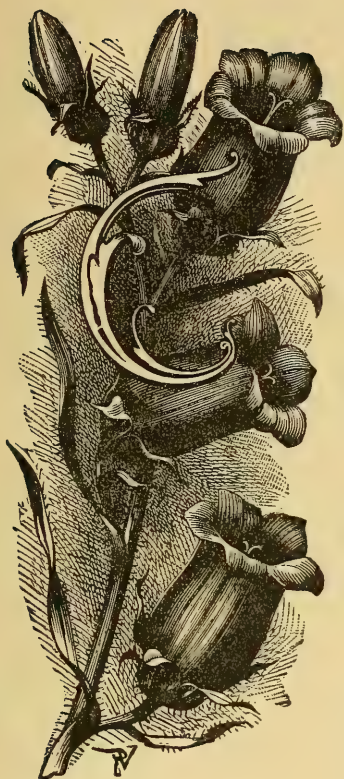
*Adapted from Hudibras.*

"The bee is on the wing."

*Nursery Hymn.*

"The full soul loatheth an honeycomb."

*Proverbs, XXVII, 7.*



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

ARELESSLY thus I: "Bees, yes; I've had my experience with these industrious gleaners of the sweets of flowers, and have some painful recollections thereof."

"But have you no pleasureable remembrances of bees and the bee-business?"

"Oh, yes; but I'm not adapted to the business of the apiarist, I fear."

"Well, and why not? have you ever tried handling bees?"

"Yes,—I've tried."

"Well, what was the result? I have heard that you were keeping them at Oakfields, and meeting with gratifying success."

"Yes, they are kept there, I believe; but I seldom trouble them if they don't interfere with me first. In fact that matter is entirely in the hands of a much more competent person, whose whole soul is absorbed in her work, and who quite willingly excuses me from participating therein."

"But I should think you would like the work,—it is so cleanly, so healthful, so full of interesting features and beautiful associations."

A conversation, quite similar in character to the above, once transpired between a lady and myself, and in reply to



her last proposition to give my reasons for not taking a more active part in the bee-keeping branch of business at Oakfields, I unfolded to her a horrifying tale of my adventures with bees. I can perhaps give the reader of this history no livelier account of my woeful early experience in the apiary than by re-producing here a series of four letters addressed by the author of this book to his brother Horace during June, 1883. These epistles ran as follows:

OAKFIELDS, June 1st, 1883.

DEAR HORACE:—We have gone into the bee-business, Malvina and I. It is true it is not an equal partnership;—I have but little to say—am, in short, only a *silent* partner, whose humble opinion, if given at all, is to be expressed in the most respectful terms to win a hearing, and, after that, is to be respected and acted upon, or rejected with ignominy, just as the senior member of the house deems best. M. lords it over me rather high-handedly, I suspect; but so long as she takes the post of responsibility and—and—danger, Horace, I submit with beautiful resignation.

We are very proud of our new bees (just imported from a southern county), or, at least, the head of the firm is so, and I think I shall be when I am better acquainted with them. They are an *emphatic* sort of an insect in their working, humming and general behavior, and hence they are called *Italics*. They are a *capital* race I hear, and they are very beautiful—so it is said—but my observations thus far have been made at long range, and hence I cannot speak with that degree of positiveness I should like to, concerning them.

Have you ever made this branch of entomology a study, Horace? If not, you ought to do so without further waste of time. Is it not written: “Eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honey-comb, which is sweet to thy taste”?\*

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\*Prov. XXIV, 13.

It is a most fascinating pursuit, Horace, and you will feel your mind expand under the influence of the study like—like the balloon-sack undergoing the process of blowing up! I have now been investigating in this line more than two weeks, and the pleasure I have derived from it is quite incalculable, and the novel facts I have become master of,—the new beauties which have been unfolded in the economy of nature, Horace, have improved my mind and made almost another man of me.

I find that bees were invented a great many years ago, my boy, ever so many years ago, in fact; that at first they didn't amount to any certain sum to man as a domestic, honey-producing engine, were very roughly put together, and were never patented until the poets took the matter up, after which event the little insect became very fashionable within a short space of time. The name of the original patentee of the honey-bee, however, is lost in hoary antiquity. Since that day, from time to time, improvements in honey-makers appear to have been made, and at length, as we bee-men fondly deem, our insect has reached something like perfect perfection!

I am informed (by much reading, Horace) that there are various sorts and kinds of bees. There are the Germanic races, the Italic tribes, the Cyprian, the Rigid Disciplinarian (I think), and possibly others. They are all nice, Horace,—so Malvina tells me,—and I am learning as rapidly as possible to love 'em and respect 'em. Ah, you "Blessed Bees"! (as the Rev. Oscar Clute has dubbed you), how I do admire you! At a distance, as yet, Horace, mind; but the admiration is none the less sincere, if more subdued.

We have four whole *colonies*, Horace, (we used to call 'em *hives*; certain of our neighbors speak of 'em as *skips*, while the Scotch call 'em *skeps*; but in the revised nomenclature 'tis *colonies*), and we mean to make a great deal of money. We are taking all the bee magazines published, and from

these we learn that in this pursuit we are on the direct highway road to affluence. We don't want the folks in this part to buy their *sweetening* of anybody but us. We mean to supply all this and that portions of the state.

Should think, Horace, you would brush up and engage in this lucrative and delightful business too. Of course you could move into another portion of the country where nobody had read up on this branch of industry, and where you could enjoy a monopoly thereof, and we should be left in the same happy condition here. It is so elevating a pursuit, Horace, and at the same time so remunerative.

You may be inclined to set me down as an enthusiast in this matter, Horace,—and I fear that I shall be obliged to plead guilty to the soft impeachment, at least to a limited extent. I have *always* had a sort of hankering after bees. Years and years ago, when I used to sing that little song beginning,

“How doth the little busy bee  
Improve each shining hour?”

My heart was wont to yearn toward the beautiful and musical insect; and the two following verses ever conveyed to my mind a sweet image of “nature in her loveliness”.

“In gathering honey all the day  
From every opening flower.”

Honey is so delicious to the childish palate!

Don't fail to give the suggestions contained in this epistle your earnest attention, Horace, and believe me, though with enthusiasm, with dignity,

Yours,

HEZ.

OAKFIELDS, June 16, 1883.

DEAR HORACE:—It is still pleasanter in my rural retreat since my banks have been

“Furnished with bees  
Whose murmurs invite one to sleep!”

as the sweet poet most sweetly sings. My enthusiasm in this matter has not abated one jot, or one tittle, since I last wrote; but, on the contrary, has increased with the lapse of time. I am reading all the works on my favorite subject I have been able to procure, and have determined myself to prepare an exhaustive treatise upon the subject of bees and their products. There is something in this pursuit, my boy, that causes us all to feel the *cacoethes scribendi* — sets us all to scribbling — and I am only hesitating at present to determine whether or not I would better give my discourse the poetic form,—or if you will have a pun (you rogue!), whether or not it would be *more meet* to use *meter* than plain prose in treating of so beautiful — so delightful a subject. I design that this work of mine shall not only supercede all existing manuals as a text book for the practical apiarist, but shall also form a valuable addition to the literary wealth of the language, and become a classic. It is a subject that naturally appeals to the imagination, Horace, and why, indeed, may not an immortal literary work, ornamented with all the graces of style and flowers of fancy, be produced, with this science as its occasion and its groundwork?

If you desire to commence your studies of this great subject forthwith, Horace, I would recommend to you the works of Langstroth, Huber, Quinby, Cook, Clute, Newman, and Alley; but if you feel as if you could wait a few weeks, my great work will be out, and you will need nothing further.

I am, dear Horace, growing bolder in my investigations of the habits of the wonderfully interesting little insects, with each succeeding day. To be sure, I have not at any time pursued my studies of them with the aid of a telescope, as some of my neighbors have maliciously reported concerning me; neither have I recklessly exposed to utter ruin (which might easily result from the stings with which

these small winged creatures are known to be armed) what little of personal beauty nature has endowed me withal. I have adopted a mean. I have, indeed, ventured quite close to the stands; but this only at the point where the house approaches nearest thereto, and I have usually exercised the precaution to have a closed window between myself and the objects of my ardent study. It was probably upon this circumstance that the meddlesome people before spoken of built their fabrication about the telescope. That is to say, I have made my observations *through a glass*! You will see illustrated by this, Horace, upon how slight a foundation of fact sometimes will rest a prodigious superstructure of gossip!\*

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\*We cannot escape meddlesome neighbors—go where we will! Even the Brook-Farmers had them; and, in the *Blithedale Romance*, HAWTHORNE has given a humorous and highly entertaining account of their gossiping ways:

“To be sure,” writes the novelist, “our next neighbors pretended to be incredulous as to our real proficiency in the business we had taken in hand. They told slanderous fables about our inability to yoke our own oxen, or to drive them a-field when yoked, or to release the poor brutes from their conjugal bond at nightfall. They had the face to say, too, that the cows laughed at our awkwardness at milking-time, and invariably kicked over the pails; partly in consequence of our putting the stools on the wrong side, and partly because, taking offense at the whisking of their tails, we were in the habit of holding these natural fly-flappers in one hand, and milking with the other. They further averred that we hoed up whole acres of Indian corn and other crops, and drew the earth carefully about the weeds; and that we raised five hundred tufts of burdock, mistaking them for cabbage; and that by dint of unskillful planting, few of our seeds ever came up at all, or, if they did come up, it was stern-foremost; and that we spent the better part of the month of June in reversing a field of beans, which had thrust themselves out of the ground in this unseemly way.”

And many more things the gossiping neighbors reported concerning the Blithesdalers, including the story that the society had been entirely exterminated by the awkward handling of its scythes one day in the meadow, and that the world was none the worse off therefor, etc., etc.

“For people will talk.”



Later, however, from time to time, when the bees have been quite quiet, and I have thought that perhaps they were too busy to notice me, I have softly raised my window, and sat boldly, with uncovered head, gazing with apparent placidity at their little village,—situated so pleasantly there in the middle of the pretty grass-plot to the north-westward of the house,—almost wondering, too, at my own temerity, and often hardly daring to breathe for fear of disturbing them.

Still later, one day I ventured, covered with netting from head to heel as with a garment, to saunter forth with the senior member of the bee-and-honey company, and, affecting a bravery which I could not feel, walk up to within a few feet of the first colony. But I did not linger long thereabout; I had business at another part of the farm and so was forced reluctantly (!) to withdraw. I regarded the bubbling, boiling colony, Horace, and thought of its vulgar name, and — *I skipped!*

Only a little while later I tried once again; and after much urging, actually assisted the head of the firm in removing the upper story of the hive. “Just look at the little beauties!” she exclaimed admiringly. I looked in: what seemed to me a large mass of liquid, live and lively coals, as nearly as I can describe it, was there. I felt a sort of qualmishness at the stomach, brought on, doubtless, by the intense heat of the sun that day (for we have had some extremely warm weather of late, you know, Horace), and so I went into the house and sat down to rest.

I presume I shall “tempt the fates” (as you will be sure to term it) still further, Horace, ere long. Think not to dissuade me, nor upbraid me for my audacious conduct. I mean to persevere, my boy, until I have mastered the beautiful mysteries of this business.

Knowing how interested you are in this pleasant subject, Horace, I shall endeavor to keep you informed as to our progress, etc.

Hoping you will profit somewhat by my experience, and, like me, learn to love bees, I remain yours as ever,

HEZ.

OAKFIELDS, June 21, 1883.

DEAR HORACE:—I have retired from the bee business, I think permanently. In the first place, I can't persuade myself that by temperament and habit I am just adapted thereto, and, speaking from more extended experience, I fear that it is not so lucrative a trade as I once had reason to believe it. Yes, "Betsey and I are out". The business continues at the "old stand", the senior member of the late firm conducting it, and she will settle all bills and collect all accounts.

Thine,

HEZ.

OAKFIELDS, June 25, 1885.

DEAR HORACE:—Yours of the 23rd inst. at hand. Yes, my last note was a trifle laconic, I believe. Forgive it, my boy, my heart was full of bitterness, and it is hard for a man to be facetious whose hopes have been wrecked—whose confidence betrayed.

Yea, Horace, I have been made the wretched victim of misplaced confidence in that insect which *Auceps* in the *Complete Angler* so justly dubs "a little, contemptible creature". Grown bolder by immunity from punishment, I had pressed closer and closer to the side of Malvina as she prosecuted her labors among the Italian vermin, and I even, on a sudden occasion arising where my aid was needed during "swarming time", sallied out in the thick of the skirmish, sans hat, net, or gloves, and then it was that one of the marauding crew struck me in the eye and stuck there, while I clutched, pawed and stamped. Others came to the varlet's assistance, and I fled in agony wildly across the fields, while shrieks of laughter from the whole Oakfields household pursued me. I received many stings, a very painful one in the

organ of vision, but the great hurt of all was the moral one when I reflected upon the black ingratitude of the Italian beasts whom I had loved, and whose virtues and sweetnesses I had for the past four weeks been proposing to celebrate in an immortal book!

Therefore, Horace, am I done with bees; and I conjure thee, ere thou engagest in the care of them, to reflect upon the state of those Greeks of the Ten Thousand, who partook of the honey of the Rhododendron in the village of the Colchians, whereby they were intoxicated and made mad, and had like to have perished miserably, and this after surviving manifold adventures and untold hardships in the wilderness, and when already come within sight of the sea! Shun the lot of the apiarist, Horace; flee from the wicked bee before she pursueth; turn from her and pass away! for verily deceitfulness lieth within the golden bands, and much misery in the envenomed sting, which, like a masked battery, inhabiteth the "tents of wickedness" constituting her rear apartments! Suffer not your mind to be led captive by the siren-voice of Cook, nor of him who wrote the *Blessed Bees*; permit not your imagination to revel in "Hyblæan sweets", nor covet the nectar of Hymettus!

It is a small business at best, Horace, and, soberly speaking, one fraught with danger. I adjure thee again to keep out of it while thou art safe and whole. Behold one of my eyes is in mourning, there are lumps, gigantic lumps, lumps surmounting lumps,—Pelion upon Ossa,—

‘ Hills over hills, and Alps on Alps arise,’—

about my neck and forehead ; my heart is sore, and my temper is not as angelic as it has been. Solemnly, Horace, don't meddle with bees !

Sorrowfully thine,                HEZ.

I trust, however, the reader will prove far too sensible to take seriously to heart aught set down in the above series of

ridiculous epistles to Horace. My brother is a kind, good, and sensible person. These things would amuse him. You know

“A little nonsense now and then  
Is relished by the wisest men.”

I could furnish them without straining my conscience very seriously,—for some little foundation for such whimses was furnished me during my early experience in the apiary. For these reasons and no others the letters were written. Having been written, they were, of course, a part of the history of the place and the persons we are herein concerned about; and the writer, as an impartial historian, was bound to give them.

These trifling matters being thus happily disposed of, so that they are not likely to become the subject of cavil in a future day, I desire to embrace the present opportunity to declare that I do love the honey-bee with an affection pure and ardent. I also esteem the work of the apiarist as among the most delectable employments man or woman ever engaged in. Moreover, I love all men and women who love bees! and would carry the matter still further if I knew how, and this in all sincerity, too!

There is something fascinating,—of absorbing interest, and exquisitely beautiful to me in this honey-producing business! The decent, scrupulously-cleanly, and always-busy-about-her-own-affairs little worker-bee, sets an example for every good citizen to imitate. Wonderful is the economy of these industrious communities! Most delightful are all the steps and circumstances leading up to the production of that pure vegetable sweet,—among the loveliest things it is given man to eat,—and esteemed by the ancients—and little wonder!—as food, fit for the gods! Is it a thing to marvel at, that good men and women,—lovers of their kind and lovers of nature,—are nearly certain to become enamored of the honey-bee, and of the business of bee-keeping,







once their attention is directed this way? The wonder would be if they did not!

The apiarist is called out among the most interesting objects by his little filmy-winged servant, whose errand is to the sweetest flowers of the field and forest,—whose arena of labor embraces broad areas covered with the star-eyed clover, mint-scented and blossom-jeweled wild meadows, cool woodlands, where the fanning zephyrs are early laden with the fragrant bloom-breath of the sugar maple and later with the odor of the blossoms of the stately bass-wood,—and whose season of activity embraces every “shining hour” of the golden summer time.

I have seasons hours of richest enjoyment, as, in the pleasant company of the dearest one on earth, on some bright vernal day, I have wandered over my sweet fields,—those same sunny fields which, even as I write, stretch under my eye away to the distant highway on the east,—and looked eagerly for our graceful, bright-ringed Italians on every precocious, though modest, white clover-head,—and felt a thousand-fold repaid when we had so found one of them—the darlings! And sweet, sweet has been the music of the “numerous choir” from the nectar-stored hive, which has greeted my ear on many a pleasant ramble through my beaver-meadows and forest-glades, when the axillary blossoms of the mint have attracted, and the leaves of the plant have all-concealed the busy musicians!

Oakfields, thou hast, indeed, proved thyself a land flowing with milk and honey! and thou art dear, therefore, to the heart that dictates this inscription to thee! and the beneficent kine—the gentle, mild-eyed, Shorthorn grades—which have converted the rich juices of thy sweet tender grasses and fragrant clovers into the one, and the blessed, dainty insect which collects from thy fairy flower-cups freely for my use, the other, do I celebrate in this my pæan!

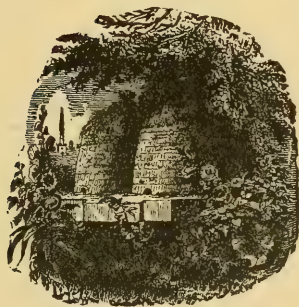
So many lovely things are given for our enjoyment on this sweet earth! Birds with soulful voices, exquisitely-dyed

flowers with honeyed fragrance, musically murmuring bees and other insects, trees, sparkling running-waters, or placid ponds, rainbows, stars, sunsets, cloud-curtains, evening zephyrs, dews, grasses,—and we—ah, so blind, deaf and dull of all perception! But a full chapter were not too much for a consideration of this subject.

“I have woven shrouds of air  
In a loom of hurrying light,  
For the trees which blossoms bear,  
And gilded them with sheets of bright;  
I fall upon the grass like love’s first kiss;  
I make the golden flies and their fine bliss;  
I paint the hedge-rows in the lane,  
And clover white and red the pathways bear;  
I laugh aloud in sudden gusts of rain  
To see the ocean lash himself in air;  
I throw smooth shells and weeds along the beach,  
And pour the curling waves far o’er the glossy reach;  
Swing birds’ nests in the elms, and shake cool moss  
Along the aged beams, and hide their loss.”\*

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\*CHANNING: *The Earth-spirit*.



## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XXXV.



“Look how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold ;  
There’s not the smallest orb which thou beholdest  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubim :  
Such harmony is in immortal souls.”

SHAKESPEARE: *Merchant of Venice*.

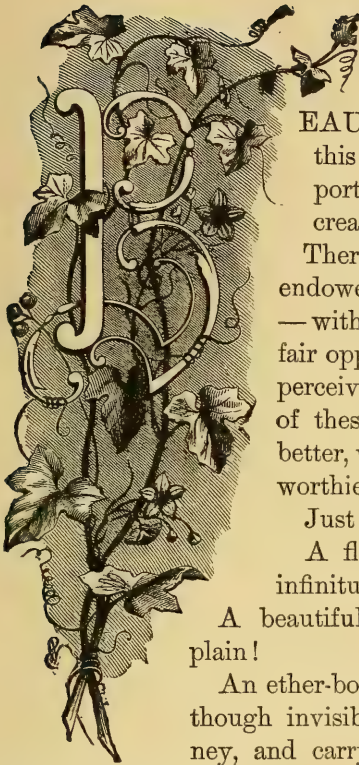
“A wilderness of sweets, for Nature here  
Wantons as in her prime, and plays at will  
Her virgin fancies.”

MILTON: *Paradise Lost*, Book V.

“Come forth, come forth ! prove all the time will gain ;  
For Nature bids the best and never bids in vain.”

BEN JONSON.

## CHAPTER XXXV.



BEAUTIFUL, beautiful indeed, is this world of ours, and it is but a portion of a glorious and infinite creation.

There are a few of us who are endowed with senses and sensibilities — with bodies and souls — capable, fair opportunity being given, both of perceiving and enjoying a good deal of these things, and of being made better, wiser, stronger, yea, every way worthier thereby.

Just consider what this earth is :

A floating, revolving ball in the infinitude of space!

A beautiful traveller over an endless plain!

An ether-borne car impelled by untiring, though invisible steeds, on an endless journey, and carrying innumerable passengers from time unto eternity!

The filial daughter of the majestic sun! Sister of all the circling planets! Mother of the beauteous, silver-haired moon! Member of a resplendent family of golden-voiced minstrels, moving in grand marches, with glorious harmonies, through the illimitable universe of God!

“In reason’s ear they all rejoice,  
And utter forth a glorious voice,—  
Forever singing as they shine  
The hand that made us is divine!”\*

Consider, I say, our heritage :

The earth, the most beautiful earth,—fitted up in the beginning to be man's perfect home! Lo, its green continents, and islands! "poured round all," the grand old ocean! its silver-bright lakes and streams! its sweet vicissitudes of seasons and of day and night! its blue sky! its ever-shifting scenery of clouds! its rainbows! its zephyrs its dews! its showers! its storms, grand, terrific,

"Yet lovely in their strength as is the light  
Of a dark eye in woman!"\*

its mountains! its flowers! its trees! its "innumerable life!" All, all this given to man for his use, his contemplation, his delight!

Beautiful, most beautiful!

The bright stars are ours, too,—yea, as much, as truly ours as if we were the only intelligent beings in the universe;—far, far above us are they, ever-burning, golden lamps,—so distant, so serene,—fixed, sublime, eternal! yet of man how tender! of earth and its concerns how lovingly watchful! † Who but has felt "the sweet influences of the Pleiades"? Who would "loose the bands of Orion"?

And the moon,—our own blessed orb! peculiarly our own! our faithful mild-faced, darling moon! Surely, surely,

"The undevout astronomer *is* mad"!‡

What numbers innumerable of lovely things are close at hand at all times if we will but look! Under your foot as you take your next step abroad you will crush a fairy

\*BYRON: *Childe Harold*.

†"All lived to me—the tree—the flower—  
To me the murmuring fountain sung;  
What feels not felt, so strong a power  
Of life my life o'er all had flung."

SCHILLER, WILSON'S Trans.

‡YOUNG: *Night Thoughts*.



world of sweetness, beauty and mystery in a single blade of grass! In the small blossom of that common, and, because common, despised weed you pass unnoticed by, is a perfection of beauty and grace surpassing all that art ever produced! In the dew-drop, in the rainbow, in the snow crys-



tal is there naught to excite delight and wonder? Yea, Thoreau, we are indeed "rained and snowed on with gems",

and it must ever appear to the poetical mind that these lovely things are each the "product of an enthusiasm, the creature of an ecstasy"!

Why were flowers created with their perfection of color, their various and exquisite fragrance? Why were the clouds given their innumerable, fleeting, fanciful forms and tints of beauty? Why the infinitude of graceful shapes of the vegetable creation,—the leaf, the blade, the tendril, the spray? Why the eye-delighting curves and lines of the figures of bird and insect, and the musical sounds these tiny creatures produce by which the ear is gladdened and the imagination fed? Why the silver radiance of the moon,—the diamond lustre of the stars,—the golden and glorious effulgence of the sun? Why was there given to man all these beautiful and lovely things, but that he should contemplate them, enjoy them, drink deep of them, and by his contemplation and enjoyment his soul should be expanded, lifted up, glorified, until he becomes

"As one who in a silver vision floats,  
Obedient to the sweep of odorous winds  
Upon resplendent clouds"?\*

"Oh, Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all! the earth is full of thy riches!"†

And shall not all this loveliness — this perfection of grace and beauty — and the thought that it has been designed so wisely and so benevolently for his own instruction and happiness, teach him

"To look through nature up to nature's God"?‡

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\*SHELLEY. †*Psalms*, CIV., 24.

‡POPE's *Essay on Man*.

And CARLYLE writes: Oh, could I transport thee direct from the Beginnings to the Endings, how were thy eye-sight unsealed, and thy heart set flaming in the Light-sea of celestial wonder! Thou sawest then that this fair Universe, were it in the meanest province thereof, is in very deed the star-domed City of God; that through every star, through

Luther, somewhere as beautifully as truthfully says:  
 "God writes the gospel not in the bible alone; but in trees,  
 and flowers, and clouds, and stars."

"The harp at Nature's advent strung  
 Has never ceased to play;  
 The song the stars of morning sung  
 Has never died away.

"And prayer is made, and praise is given  
 By all things near and far;  
 The ocean looketh up to heaven  
 And mirrors every star.

"Its waves are kneeling on the strand,  
 As kneels the human knee;—  
 Their white locks bowing to the sand,—  
 The priesthood of the sea!

"They pour their glittering treasures forth,  
 Their gifts of pearl they bring;  
 And all the listening hills of earth  
 Take up the song they sing.

"The green earth sends her incense up  
 From many a mountain shrine;  
 From folded leaf and dewy cup  
 She pours her sacred wine.

"The mists above the mountain rills  
 Rise white as wings of prayer;  
 The altar-curtains of the hills  
 Are sunset's purple air.

"The winds with hymns of praise are loud,  
 Or low with sobs of pain,—  
 The thunder-organ of the cloud,  
 The droppings of the rain.

"With drooping head and branches crossed,  
 The twilight forest grieves,  
 Or speaks in tongues of pentecost  
 From all its sun-lit leaves.

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every grass-blade, and most through every Living Soul, the glory of a present God still beams. But Nature, which is the Time-vesture of God, and reveals him to the wise, hides him from the foolish."—*Sartor Resartus*, Book 3, Chap VIII.

"The blue sky is the temple's arch,  
 Its transept, earth and air;  
 The music of its starry march,  
 The chorus of a prayer.

"So nature keeps the reverent frame  
 With which its years began,  
 And all her signs and voices shame  
 The prayerless heart of man."\*

I feel that I have not, heretofore, loved nature as I ought, or rather that I have been so cowardly and so weak that I have allowed myself to be drawn too much away from her; and I believe that had I lived closer to her it would have rendered my life a fuller, happier, and a more profitable one.† I know that I have not sinned in this kind so much or so deeply as many others; and my heart is sick when I think of the narrow and unwholesome lives lived by grand-souled creatures, who have never broken away from the sordid ties which have held them in thrall to mammon, or fashion, and who will go down to the tomb, dwarfed and crippled things — half developed — who have been content to creep where they might have walked erect,—to grovel when to soar was in their power.

"He hath made everything beautiful in his time; also, he hath set the world in their hearts so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from beginning to end."‡

Shall I not do a service to my kind if, in the language of

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\*WHITTIER.

†"And hark, how blithe the throstle sings,  
 He, too, is no mean preacher;  
 Come forth into the light of things,—  
 Let Nature be your teacher.

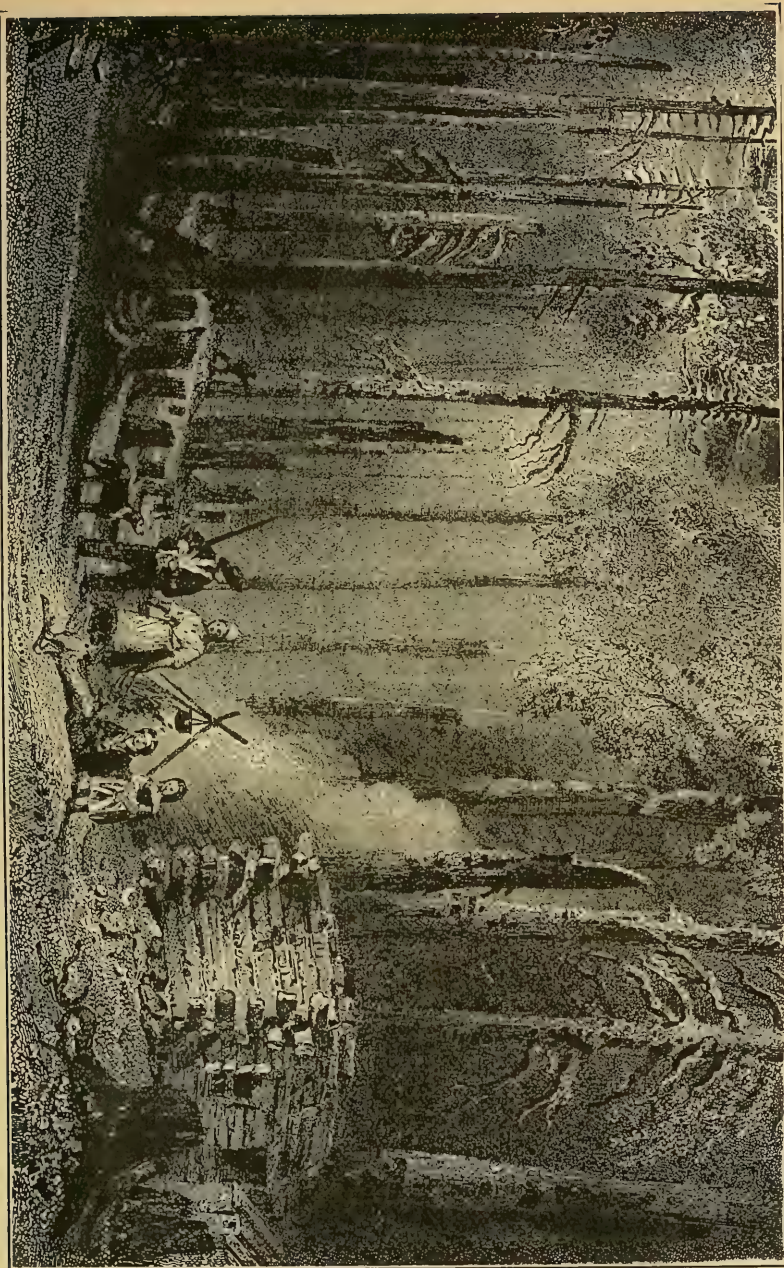
She has a world of ready wealth  
 Our minds and hearts to bless;  
 Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,  
 Truth breathed by cheerfulness."

WORDSWORTH: *Nature*.

‡*Ecclesiastes*, III, 11.



SCENE IN OUR FOREST AT AN EARLIER DAY.







Coleridge, I shall be able by effort of mine to awaken in some of these "the mind's attention to the lethargy of custom, \* \* to the loveliness and wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustable treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes yet see not, and ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand" ?\*

What fatuity is this — or is it rather a fatality ? — that binds us mortals down to the service of fashion and convention? Alas, we have caught from the world the maxim, "Money answereth all things!" † We would be wealthy, forsooth, to be respectable, influential, distinguished. And we must pay the price.

"The horseman serves the horse,  
The neatherd serves the neat,  
The merchant serves the purse,  
The eater serves his meat;  
'Tis the day of the chattel,  
Web to weave and corn to grind;  
Things are in the saddle,  
And ride mankind!  
There are two laws discrete,  
Not reconciled,—  
Law for man and law for thing;  
The last builds town and fleet,—  
But it runs wild,—  
And doth the man unking."‡

This is the age of gold :

"Gold! gold! gold! gold!  
Bright and yellow, hard and cold."§

Gold we must and will have, forgetting that it is written that "he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent".|| And, of itself, what is this wealth we covet ?

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\**Biographia Literaria*, Chap. XV. †*Ecclesiastes*, X, 19.

‡EMERSON : *Ode to CHANNING*. §HOOD. ||*Prov.* XXVIII, 20.

"'Tis pitiful", says Emerson, "the things by which we are rich or poor,—a matter of coins, coats, carpets; a little more or less stone, or wood, or paint,—the fashion of a cloak or hat; like the luck of the naked Indians, of whom one is proud in the possession of a glass bead, or red feather, and the rest miserable in the want of it."\*

We are all forced to confess it; but we do not all possess the courage of our convictions. How brave was he, the poet-hermit of Walden! Here was one, if such there ever were, who nobly dared be free. He declared that he went to his hermitage beside the little pond because he "wished to live deliberately", to "front only the essential facts of life", and to see if he "could not learn what it had to teach"; not desiring, when he came to die, *to discover that he had not lived!*†

With what a whole-hearted affection did this man regard nature. It does one good to read his pages where this glowing sentiment has inspired his pen. "It is as sweet a mystery to me as ever what this world is," he writes. His heart and his books are full of this. "There is a sweet world," he somewhere poetically says, "which lies along the strains of the wood-thrush, the rich intervalles which border the stream of his song, more thoroughly genial to my nature than any other."

The life of Wordsworth has always seemed to me one fraught with beauty, beneficence, and happiness. "He was a poet, and a wise and good one;" a man sent with a mission to men; and how well did he fulfill it! He possessed the requisite faith and courage to live the right life,—to be true to his instincts; and the world is better because he lived! How noble, indeed, the sweet and simple life led by this modest, unassuming man in his rural home at Rydal Mount! How blessed he,

"Who had faith in God and Nature,"‡

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\**Essays, Works and Days.*

†*Walden.*

‡LONGFELLOW.

and made it manifest in a way that we every-day men, cravens and traitors to our own better selves and interests, dare not do!\*

Is it for me who love the covert, the breath, and the leaf-tinted light of the boundless woods, the murmur of the brooks, the smiling ponds and pools which image heaven,

“The rushing of great rivers,”

the hum of insects, the song of “nature’s minstrels”, the sweet grass, and every tree, shrub and herb,—the sight and sound of everything wild and free,—and all the delightful odors of wood and field, and that of the good earth itself,—the grateful fragrance of the lovely forest flowers, seeming like the offerings of blessed spirits,—the fairy birds, flitting from spray to spray under the wide canopy of the leaves,—the cuckoo’s lone call,—the drumming of the partridge,—the squirrel chattering in the wilds, with mischievous eyes and impish pranks,—the wavering flight of the “painted butterfly”,—the fresh-breathed, verdant fields, with all that there inhabit,—the mellow lowing of the kine,—the free-blowing winds,—the bellowing thunder and the sword-like lightning,—the dew and the shower,—the roseate dawn,—the golden sunset,—the hills, “the everlasting hills”, and mighty mountains, those

“Dread ambassadors from earth to Heaven!”—†

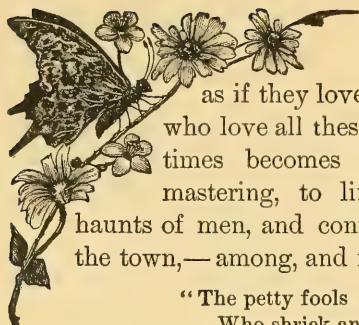
the blue dome above,—the light-rolling clouds, and the dark-featured storm-cloud,—the moon, “burning with a pale

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\*The two men last named were of that small number strong enough and wise enough to observe, in the ordering of their lives, the sage counsel of SIR THOMAS BROWNE:

“Though the world be histrionical,” observes our quaint author, “and most men live ironically, yet be thou what thou singly art, and personate only thyself. Swim smoothly in the stream of thy nature, and live but one man. To single hearts doubling is discruciating; such tempers must sweat to dissemble, and prove but hypocritical hypocrites.”—*Christian Morals*, Part III, Sec. 20.

†COLERIDGE: *Hymn to Mt. Blanc*.



flame", — the glowing stars  
 which look down upon man  
 as if they loved him! — is it for me, I repeat,  
 who love all these things with a love that some-  
 times becomes passionate and almost over-  
 mastering, to linger in the dry and dusty  
 haunts of men, and continue the tasteless pursuits of  
 the town,—among, and forced while there to be one of

"The petty fools \* \* \*  
 Who shriek and sweat in pigmy wars,  
 Before the stony face of time,  
 And looked at by the silent stars!"\*

What a gift is moral courage! How few possess it! How many can you, oh, you who read this page! enumerate at this moment among your acquaintances who are gifted with this quality in an eminent degree? How few are there of such among the writers of the books we read! How few, indeed, among historical personages!

Burns, I think, possessed this quality; it is breathed in every line of the following:

"Is there for honest poverty  
 That hings his head and a' that?  
 The coward slave, we pass him by,—  
 We dare be poor for a' that?  
 For a' that, and a' that,  
 Our toil's obscure, and a' that;  
 The rank is but the guinea's stamp,—  
 The man's the gowd for a' that!

"What though on hamely fare we dine,  
 Wear hoddin gray, and a' that?  
 Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,  
 A man's a man for a' that!  
 For a' that, and a' that,  
 Their tinsel show, and a' that;  
 The honest man, though e'er sae poor,  
 Is king o' men for a' that!"

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\*TENNYSON.



Here, again, was a man who dared follow the bent of his own genius, live the life he loved, and utter his own manly thoughts! Who at this day, with a full sense of the circumstances and surroundings of the writer of that glorious poem at the date of its production, can read it through, albeit for the one hundredth time, without tears!

Thoreau was equally brave, and his "What is man is all in all; nature nothing but as she draws him out and reflects him," is a noble piece of self-assertion. Wordsworth possessed wonderful moral courage, as I have before noted, and was such a one, had his character lacked this essential attribute, as would never have accomplished any worthy work in the world.

Each of these poets was great enough to dare to

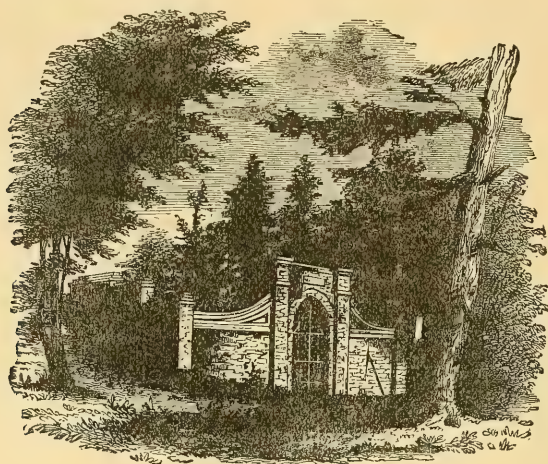
"Bend his practice to his prayer,  
And, following his mighty heart,  
Shame the times and live apart!"\*

Of men in other walks of life, Dr. Johnson — whom I could never bring myself to regard as a poet — was one of the most gifted of men in this quality of moral courage; and it was this moral quality, coupled with his confessedly great mental endowments, which enabled him during his era to so dominate the intellectual world. Pericles, among the Greeks, was undoubtedly a gifted man in respect of this moral quality. Wonderful was its development in old Socrates! What would Luther have been without it? George Washington, whose name is held in reverence by liberty-loving people of a thousand languages, and whose sacred tomb will remain a shrine to be visited by reverent pilgrims from the world's ends, while the name of freedom wakes an echo in human hearts, is an example of a person whose character, ennobled by the presence of this quality in an unusual degree, shed a luster over the cause of his coun-

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\*EMERSON: *The Poet*.

try in its struggle for independence, and brightened all the age in which he lived !



Every one of these great men, each according to his gift, pursued the path of life marked out by nature, undeterred by the sneers or the menaces of the opposers.

Thank Heaven that moral courage is a quality capable of development by cultivation! But it is sad to reflect that the influences of modern civilization do not all tend to favor that development. A greed of wealth, an ambition of shining, a distrust of the value of the objects of mental and moral culture,—all these mark this age, even as they have marked the ages which preceded. But, perhaps there is promise of improvement, as the genial optimists believe. Perhaps we are nearer than ever to the time that Burns foresaw :

“Then let us pray that come it may,  
As *come it will*, for a’ that,  
That sense and worth o’er all the earth  
Shall bear the gree for a’ that!”

Coming to the end of the year I find myself ever deeply regretful that I have not given more time to observing,

reflecting upon, and enjoying the wondrous things of the rich and varied stores of nature's magazine! So much have I missed; so little of all have I caught!

Consider the phenomena presented by the change of the seasons:

In the new spring the first appearance of green at the bottom of the brook,—the coming of the willow-pussies,—the starting of the bud—the reddening, the growing green, and then the bursting thereof in the sunlight,—the opening upon the sunny knoll of the first violet—that “wee earth-born star”—that delicate forest-waif with scented breath and “look so like a smile”,—the growth of the graceful leaf and the grass-blade,—the gradual unfolding of the apple-blossom! Ah, one should spend, the whole season of the apple-bloom in the orchard! Neither day nor



night should he *dare* quit his post! Oh, the delicious fragrance, the heavenly tints of the generous bloom! Lo, the flitting birds, delirious with joy, making earth ring with their music,—the thousand and one voices of busy and happy insects, conspicuous when the morning damp has disappeared, the hum of millions of busy bees,—the sweet new grass underneath—the diamond dew-drops thereon

pendent in the rosy morn as the great sun appears in all his splendor of golden flame,—the deepening blue of the sky which succeeds,—the soft breezes!—all these,

“Oh, how can you renounce and hope to be forgiven!”

Peculiarly, at this sweet vernal season,

“There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,”\*

more wholesome, sweeter, more profound, and more lasting than any I have ever found in the giddy amusements and excitements incident to town life.†

The whole vast forest now, consciously as it seems, and joyously, is undergoing its new resurrection! On every spray and bough are signs of renewed life, in color or in form. There are a multitude of glad voices—vegetable voices—“soft and soul-like sounds”,‡ heard by the close-listening ear of the poet and the lover of nature, and a thousand delicate odors are perceptible.

The whole heart is filled with these things, and the feelings grown tender, the bosom surcharged causes the eyes often to overflow with tears of gladness, love, and gratitude. The sweet echoes are close at hand now, and from their lurking places in the dim caverns of the old woods, they quickly and joyously repeat the “cheep” of the frog, the carol of the bird, the hum of the bee, the gurgle of the rill, or your own exclamation of surprise or delight.

What would nature be without the birds? With us the

\*BYRON: *Childe Harold*.

†“One impulse from a vernal wood  
May teach you more of man,  
Of moral evil and of good  
Than all the sages can!”

SHAKESPEARE.

‡COLERIDGE: *Hymn to Mt. Blanc*.

And KEATS has this couplet:

“A little noiseless noise among the leaves,  
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves.”



robin which "loves mankind alive or dead",\* the meadow-lark, that glad spirit with plumage of "heaven's own hue" and voice angelic, and that whistler of merry catches the red-thrush,—are among the most conspicuous, and certainly the most welcome of our early songsters. Then later we have the sparrow, the bob-o-link—"harlequin of the fields", the linnet, the epauleted black-bird, the yellow-bird, the oreole, the social little wren, the pewee, martins, swallows, and various others, among which we must not forget that musical voice of the night, the whip-poor-will.

But it is not the birds alone which make the spring. We must have the frogs first, then the tree-frogs, and the toads,—yea, the toads,—the honest, harmless, musical toads! Among our early musicians we must not miss the "honeybees, God bless 'em"!† the wild bees, and the flies that love the "sunny spots of greenery". This were a sad world to lose even its insect voices! And, oh, the sweet-souled flowers! Old earth would never smile again were she bereaved of these, her starry-eyed darlings!

In later spring all is progress, and redundant life! The leaves, of myriads of graceful forms, have clothed the forest-frame in a garb of emerald hue, of varying tints, and all of transcendent beauty. The new tendrils of the vines are clinging to the "barky fingers of the elm", a wealth of bloom and fragrance is everywhere. The busy birds, "happy as the days are long", are "setting up house-keeping" in curiously contrived nests, or already brooding, with their pretty, consequential airs, upon their tiny eggs of every delicate tint. All is glad life and liberty in green fields and whispering woods.

Now comes summer—leafy summer—summer with her roses! summer with her thousand, thousand out-of-door charms! Vigorous vegetable growths are on every hand.

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\*ISAAC WALTON: *The Complete Angler*.

†CHRISTOPHER NORTH.





The fields are richly dight with growing grain and grass, gemmed with flowers, and fragrant with the breath of red and white clover. The pastures present a festive scene, with skipping lambkins and sportive calves and colts. Young birds, escaped from the nest, are essaying the use of their wings, while their anxious parents flutter about them. The cool shade of the trees is inviting, and field and forest are still musical with bird-notes and the humming of the bee. Summer! with its new generations of animals, its abounding and joyous life everywhere, its Eden-like nights, blest with mild moonlight or golden starlight, its "incense-breathing" mornings, ushered in by the bird-choir, its deep blue skies and fleecy clouds, its sweet showers, its sunsets, closing long bright days, like benedictions, and its promise of rich harvests.

Autumn, golden-crowned autumn follows. Indian-summer days, inviting out the sportsman, the naturalist, the poet, are now. Long twilights succeed afternoons of azure haze; delicious evenings, calm, cool nights follow. Now begin to appear signs of nature's decay, and a pleasurable, pensive feeling takes possession of each breast. Anon visible to the eye becomes a surprising, a miraculous change in the landscape: the entire forest doffs its green and dons its autumn suit, "tinged with a thousand dyes" Nature riots in brilliant colors. These, too, are the days of purple and golden fruitage, and rich harvests are garnered—the fulfillment of the spring and summer prophecies! Pleasant is it to ramble through field and wood, and feel renewed vigor of limb and freshness of soul. These promise, or seem to promise, that we shall survive this decay of nature, and give us intimations of immortality!

Old winter follows—rough, but kindly—with his superb frost-etchings, his myriad-formed delicate snow-crystals, his ice-gems, iridescent and of a thousand devices, his bright, bright stars, burning planets, and moon whose radiance, like

molten silver, fills the heavens to overflowing and floods all the earth !

“ Now glowed the firmament  
With living sapphires; Hesperus that led  
The starry hosts, rode brightest, till the moon,  
Rising in clouded majesty, at length,  
Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,  
And o’er the dark her silver mantle threw.”

Winter has his bright auroral displays, in beauty surpassing dreams of fairyland; his storms sublime, wrestling with the old woods, torturing the naked and writhing giants thereof, and threatening their overthrow. His glooms are black in the dense hemlock and pine forests, but finely relieved by the fitful sunshine upon the snow that burdens their boughs. How invigorating the tempestuous breath of his giant lungs! Not without beauty in his every aspect, nor unfitted to teach heroic lessons to all who love him, is grand, hoary, benevolent old winter.

Can adequate excuse be devised for the further lingering in the town of one who has learned that he can enjoy more — live more life — in a ramble of a few hours duration on a bright spring afternoon by some woodside green, than in a whole year of that other existence — to him by all comparison a life in death? When we feel that with nature we are at home, and that, absent from her, we are astray — lost, — should we not, as in duty bound to make the most of the gifts vouchsafed us, aim to





live the life nearest nature,—in other words, TO LIVE OUR OWN LIFE?

Not forgetting our obligations to society, failing not in any social or civil duty, keeping in mind, too, that there are other and important means of culture, that literature, science, art, may well serve as alternate studies, and demand a due proportion of our attention, still may we not so order our lives,—nay, is it not our imperative duty so to order them,—that the opportunity, the leisure, may be had for that sojourning with nature, that meditation upon and enjoyment of her works in which we find our purest and most delicious pleasure, and by which we feel our mental and moral natures are best developed?



WINTER IN THE WOODS.

“ Whoso walks in solitude  
And inhabiteth the wood,  
Choosing light, wave, rock, and bird,  
Before the money-loving herd,

Into the forester shall pass  
 From these companions, love and grace.  
 Clean shall he be without, within,  
 From the old adhering sin,  
 All ill dissolving in the light  
 Of his triumphant, piercing sight:  
 Not vain, sour, or frivolous;  
 Not mad, athirst, or garrulous;  
 Grave, chaste, contented, though retired,  
 And of all other men desired.  
 On him the light of star and moon  
 Shall look with purer radiance down;  
 All constellations of the sky  
 Shed their virtues through his eye."\*

"I wonder what it all means?" murmured my sweet friend, as we were driving along a country highway, one pleasant summer evening, some years ago. Starting from a reverie at the sound of her gentle voice, I saw that her eyes were fixed dreamily upon a moss-rose held in her hand.

"What all what means?" I queried abruptly.

"All this beauty," she made answer.

Her exclamation chimed in a singular manner with my thought, for I had been gazing at the clouds above the setting sun. At that time, I simply quoted in reply these lines from Keats:

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all  
 Ye mortals know on earth, and all ye need to know."†

But I have since recalled that simple episode a thousand times.‡

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\*EMERSON: *Wood Notes*. †*On a Grecian Urn*.

‡WORDSWORTH declares of poor Peter Bell that,

"A primrose by the river's brim,  
 A yellow primrose was to him,  
 And it was nothing more."

There are numerous Peter Bells in the world.

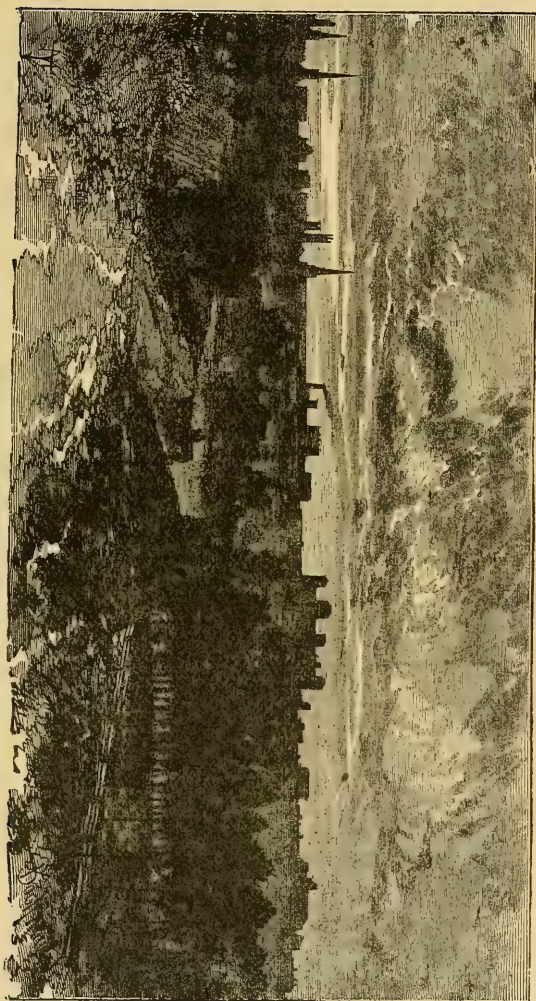
"Oh, the Bells, Bells. Bells!"

These are they whom CARLYLE thus apostrophizes:

"Thou wilt have no Mystery nor Mysticism; wilt walk through



SUNSET SCENE: WHAT MEANS ALL THIS BEAUTY?



"Then I said, 'I covet truth;  
 Beauty is unripe, childhood's cheat —  
 I leave it behind with the games of youth'  
 As I spoke, beneath my feet  
 The ground-pine curled its pretty wreath,  
 Running over the club-moss burrs;  
 I inhaled the violet's breath;  
 Around me stood the oaks and firs;  
 Pine cones and acorns lay on the ground;  
 Over me soared the eternal sky  
 Full of life and of Deity,  
 Again I saw, again I heard,  
 The rolling river, the morning bird;  
 Beauty through my senses stole —  
 I yielded myself to the perfect whole."\*

Depend upon it all this beauty of the physical universe — and as comprehensive as that did I understand to be the significance of the lady's observation — all this marvelous beauty, grace, grandeur, and sublimity which we perceive or may perceive in the natural objects about us *mean something* for you and for me!†

Come let us bathe our souls in these divine influences, hearken to those spirit-like voices, reflect upon and wonder

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the world by the sunshine of what thou callest Truth, or even by the hand-lamp of what I call Attorney-Logic; and explain all, "account for all", or believe nothing of it Nay, thou wilt attempt laughter; who so recognizes the unfathomable, all-pervading domain of Mystery, which is everywhere under our feet, and among our hands, to whom the Universe is an Oracle and a Temple, as well as a kitchen and a cattle-stall, — he shall be a delirious mystic; to him thou, with sniffing charity, wilt protrusively proffer thy hand-lamp, and shriek as one injured when he kicks his foot through it — *Sartor Resartus*: Book 1, Chap. X.

\*EMERSON: *Each and all*.

†Beautifully indeed has this thought been expressed by the Psalmist.

"When I consider thy heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained.

"What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?

"For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor.

at\* these physical manifestations of power, wisdom, and beneficence, and shall we not learn from them and their most mysterious and beautiful relation to what is best in us, to adore their maker and our own!

“Therefore am I still  
A lover of the meadows and the woods  
And mountains, and all that we behold  
From this green earth; of all the mighty world  
Of eye and ear,—both what they half create  
And half perceive; well pleased to recognize  
In nature and the language of the sense,  
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,  
The guide, the guardian of my heart and soul,  
Of all my moral being!”†

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“Thou made him to have dominion over the works of thy hand; thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea.”—*Psalm VIII*, 3 to 8.

\* ‘Wonder is the basis of worship; the reign of wonder is perennial, indestructible in man.’—CARLYLE.

† WORDSWORTH: *Excursion*.



## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XXXVI.



“Whenever the last trump shall sound, I will present myself before the sovereign Judge with this book in my hand, and loudly proclaim: Thus have I acted; these were my thoughts; such was I.”

ROUSSEAU: *Confessions.*

“Here on the market cross aloud I cry:

I, I, I! I myself I!

The form and the substance, the what and the why,

The when and the where, the low and the high,

The inside and outside, the earth and the sky,

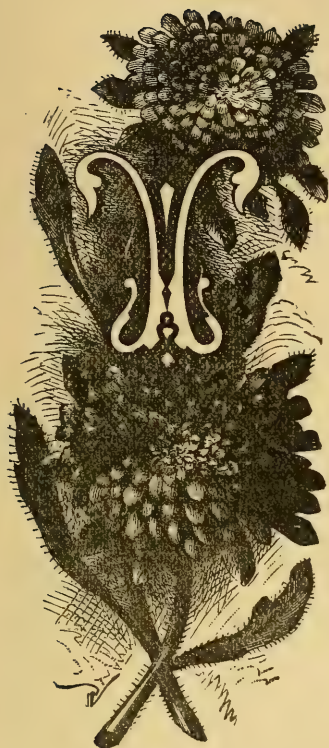
I, you and he, and he you and I,

All souls and all bodies are I myself I!”

*Burlesque of FICHTE'S Philosophy.*

“This I has two qualities: It is unjust in itself, in that it makes itself the center of everything: It is an annoyance to others, in that it would serve itself by them. Each I is the enemy and would be the tyrant of all others.”

PASCAL: *Pensees.*



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

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IS a hard and a nice subject for a man to write of himself; it grates his heart to say anything of disparagement, and the reader's ears to hear anything of praise of him."

So wrote the poet Cowley, a very good man, a tolerably sensible, if a rather self-conscious and vain one. Now, as for the author of this book, when *he* has anything to say of himself, good, bad, or indifferent, why, he just blurts it right out, without stopping to consider the consequences so far as regards his own feelings or those of his neighbor. He is at this time

aware of certain things he has revealed which betray his possession of weaknesses; he may have been beguiled by egotism or vanity (for he frankly avows that these are failings of his) into boasting of qualities, talents, &c., which he does not own; but if he have made false claims of any sort it has been through an honest mistake. He has ever assented to the teaching of Solomon that "whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain",—a deceptive and unprofitable blusterer. Never in a single instance has he intended to deceive the reader, desiring nothing so



much as to deal with strict honesty and justice by all with whom he has relations — himself included !

“Who dares think one thing and another tell,  
My heart detests him as the gates of hell.”\*

It is true that as I understand the duty of an autobiographic author, while he should in every statement exercise the utmost care to give the exact truth *so far as he goes*, I should find much difficulty in agreeing that he is bound to go as far as witnesses in our courts of justice are sworn to do, to-wit: “To tell the truth, *the whole truth*, and nothing but the truth”. To tell the truth *so far as one goes*, and nothing but the truth, would strike me as the better formula to be observed by writers of histories like this which employs my pen ; — unless, indeed, beyond this point, a little latitude for embellishment, merely, which possibly would result in advantage to all concerned, might be allowed the imaginative author.

I am free to acknowledge, however, that the question here started of “latitude for embellishment” is one difficult of decision. The privilege would be one liable to abuse in the hands of a careless writer, and the *degrees of latitude* it might be impossible to limit, once the license were granted. Still an author has to answer for his offenses in this kind at the bar of public opinion as well as to his conscience ; and the dishonest one would learn anon that he could not sin with impunity ; for is it not written that “His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealings [with truth] shall come down upon his own pate”.†

But in looking over the long and somewhat tortuous route pursued hitherto by the reader and writer of these sentences in company, I am persuaded that I must be acquitted of all suspicion of grievous sinning either in the way of self-glorification or self-screening, thus far. I am aware that

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\*POPE'S *Iliad*, Book IX, 412 and 413.

†*Psalm* VIII, 16.

Shakespeare somewhere says: "The web of our life is a mingled yarn, good and ill together; our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues." While assenting in a general way to these *dicta* of an authority too high to be idly questioned, I beg leave to submit that in a close examination of self, made since I began this chapter, I perceive but few things worse in my disposition, habits, &c., than I have either already confessed, or design to admit further along, when I shall have reached the proper place; whereas, on the other hand, I think I see certain things about me which others have never yet discovered, or, discovering, have failed to mention in my hearing, and some of these, too, matters to be *very* proud of—to boast of, I came very near saying—of which I have not yet spoken, do not intend to speak at this writing, nor yet to mention in any future chapter of this book,—unless, indeed, as one might imagine the case, I should be driven thereto by great provocation!

To illustrate this last contingency: Supposing that some wicked busy-body, of whose class there are a number believed still to be in existence, observing the care with which I exclude from my pages quotations either from foreign tongues or dead languages, and, mistaking continence for impotency, should "rise in his place" and prefer against me the charge of ignorance. Would it be unseemly, nay, would it not be esteemed a graceful act in me, who have rushed into this realm of letters, and thereby incurred a certain responsibility to such as may have become my disciples—for, whether or not it be true of any particular writer, as is declared of certain of the craft by the queer old author of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, that it is his end "to get a paper kingdom", it is quite apparent that that is what many of us do get—to vindicate myself from this malicious aspersion, and hurl back the charge to the teeth of the assaulter?

Would it not be incumbent upon me to show by example that perchance I, too, at some date in my life, "had been at a great feast of languages, and had stolen the scraps"?—that citations from French and German authors, in their native tongues, are easy for me, that Spanish quotations are not entirely beyond my attempting, and, that, although, as in the case of the great Shakespeare, and as it likewise was with the master of Abbotsford, and the Ettrick Shepherd,\* "little Latin and less Greek" serve me, still it would not be difficult for me to throw together some sentences of the former, nor quite impossible to patch up for use an odd phrase or two of the latter,—to say nothing of the classic Chippewa tongue, which once I spoke like a very native?

I sincerely hope that the charge will never be made against me, that I shall be spared this pain — this provocation — and the necessity it would force upon me of abandoning the principle adopted by me at the inception of the task upon which I am now engaged. I am still of the mind of the learned and judicious Sir Thomas Browne, who held it "an unjust way of compute, to magnify a weak head for some Latin abilities, and to undervalue a solid judgment because he knows not the genealogy of Hector".† I desire to pander to the taste of no polyglot person. As the erudite author of *The Doctor, &c.*, observes: "I write in plain English, innocently, and in the simplicity of my heart. What may be made of it in heathen languages concerneth me not." I write for English readers, and for such alone; — unless, indeed — which appears not so improbable a circumstance — some scholar, some gifted man or woman, recognizing qualities in this work which, as he (or she) perceives, characterize those productions of all lands and times which

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\* "I canna read *Homer*—except in a Latin translation done into English—the case I suspect wi' mony a one that passes for a sort o' scholar."—Hogg, in *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, XXVIII.

† *Christian Morals*, Pt. II, 4.

“men will not willingly let die”, shall make translations hereof into foreign tongues. To this, methinks, I could have no reasonable objection. But from that excess of quotation in English books in these latter days, whether in foreign or dead tongues, wherewith the piebald appearance of the foolish author reminds one of, as being no better than of a piece with the writer described in Moore’s caustic lines,—a scribbler who had

“A rabble of words at command,  
Scotch, English and slang, in promiscuous alliance”;

which is learned only in appearance, and the height of impudence in essence, good Lord deliver us! It is the work of the literary mountebank. The quotations are for the most part, as Emerson declares,\* borrowed from former English books, and not gained from the originals at first hand, as the users would have you believe, sometimes garbled and the point lost, *mal-apropos*, and always in bad taste, unless, indeed, which fortunately is not often necessary, they be employed — as in the case we have been supposing — by an honest and modest writer, unwillingly and by way of self-vindication.†

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\**Essays, Quotation and Originality.*

†The writers whose use it is to affect the pedantic style of composition condemned in this paragraph, are thus satirized by BUTLER. Describing his hero, our author says:

“When he pleased to show’t, his speech  
In loftiness of sound was rich;  
A Babylonish dialect,  
Which learned pedants much affect;  
It was a parti-colored dress  
Of patched and piebald languages;  
’Twas English cut on Greek and Latin,  
Like fustian heretofore on satin;  
It had an odd promiscuous tone,  
As if he talked three tongues in one;  
Which made some think, when he did gabble,  
They’d heard three laborers of Babel;  
Or Cerberus himself pronounce  
A leash of languages at once.”

*Hudibras, Canto I.*

As to the use of quotations made by such writers as Robert Burton in his *Anatomy*, Bacon in those works which he has left written in English, and the Gascon, Montaigne, in his *Essays*, it is defensible both on the ground of necessity and (from the peculiar education of the readers addressed) of common sense. There was little modern literature in the time of Montaigne and Bacon; the languages used by these two great writers were as yet imperfect; good translations of the ancients into the vernacular of either author, were not as yet to be found; all persons capable of reading at all read Latin, and many knew Greek, for these two languages, with a little of mathematics and some Aristotelian philosophy, formed the curriculum of study in all the schools and universities.

I have a good deal of patience with these old worthies, and read them with much pleasure, especially where some scholar of good abilities has done for me the pioneer work, and well translated all the numberless apt quotations.

For the literary manner of Coleridge\* in some of his prose works, as well as for that of those who have aped the great thinker in his worst defects, I have no good word to speak. I have of late been trying to read the *Biographia Literaria*, and what with the author's own peculiarities, and what with those worse ones of his editors, very often do I find myself becoming very much exasperated! The difficult text of the work is sought to be helped out with notes of explanation, then notes explanatory of these explanatory notes, wherein as the progress is downward, all becomes more metaphysical, more involved in a cloud of Greek, German, Latin, French, and Italian quotations, more obscure, more lost to view with each succeeding stage of exegesis, until, were it not that I know the result would be something still more involved and mystical, I could wish as did Byron of a fellow poet,

“That they would again explain their explanation”,

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\*“Divil the like ’o sic books did I ever see wi’ my een beneath the blessed licht! \* \* The *Freen* an’ the *Lay Sermons* are eneuch to drive ane tae distraction.”—*Shepherd*, in *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, XIV.



while I am continually reminded of that saying of Montaigne's: "Difficulty is a coin the learned make use of, like jugglers, to conceal the vanity of their art."\*

I doubt not, as I have intimated in a former chapter, that there are some who will censure me for my liberal citations from English writers (for soberly, like the melancholy author of the famous *Anatomy*, I must admit that "that which I have is stolen from others", at least in great part), and I do not here desire to contend that it is the better way. It was the course marked out when the skeleton of this book was first *articulated*, and I have not seen fit to depart from the original plan. I have well understood that I should meet the reproach of having uttered

"Labored nothings in so strange a style"

as to have

"Amazed the unlearn'd and made the learned smile".†

I cannot say that I am perfectly certain, had I to begin this work again, that I should not pursue a different course. I will confess that I do not so much admire the method of the ancient author and philosopher Chrysippus, who was so much in the habit of quoting, or, rather, copying, from other writers, as to give occasion to the saying of Appolodorus of him, that "should a man cull out of his works all that was none of his, nothing would remain but blank paper", as I do his antithesis in this respect, Epicurus, who in the whole three hundred books which he left behind him, had not made a citation from a single author. Perhaps either extreme should be avoided, and something like Aristotle's doctrine of *the mean* embraced.

It should also be borne constantly in mind by the reader as he peruses these pages, that this book is professedly autobiographical, and that although the style is familiar, and oft-

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\**Essays*, Chap. LIV.

†POPE: *Essay on Criticism*.

times playful, as being an account of the recreations of an easy-going farmer, in the writing whereof, to use the words of the quaint old Izaak Walton, "I have made myself a recreation of a recreation",\* the purpose is none the less definite and fixed, and will be none the less carefully pursued. The importance of the caution lies in this: It is the *business* of a work like this to delineate the character of the writer; and as a corollary to that, the more clearly it sets that character out before the mind of the reader, the more perfectly does it accomplish its work. On the contrary, in discourses which treat of the subjects of geology, arithmetic, astronomy, or of any of the other sciences, every allusion therein to the personal habits, tastes, &c, of the author would properly be esteemed an impertinence, and an offensive indication of the great vanity of the writer.

Biographical in the truest sense of the term the book is intended to be; and indeed, I might here with propriety and truth set forth in relation to it what Montaigne puts into the preface to his *Essays* concerning the collection, namely:

"It was intended for the particular use of my relatives and friends, in order that, when they have lost me, which they must soon do, they may here find some traces of my quality and humor, and may thereby nourish a more entire and lively recollection of me. Had I proposed to court the favor of the world I had set myself out in borrowed beauties; but 'twas my wish to be seen in my simple, natural and ordinary garb, without study or artifice, for 'twas myself I had to paint. My defects will appear to the life in all their native form. \* \* Thus reader you will perceive I am myself the subject of my book."†

Or, again, perchance the saying of Plutarch regarding his own works might not be inapplicable here: "It was for the sake of others", he writes, beginning his sketch of the life of

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\**The Complete Angler, Introduction.*

†HAZLITT'S Translation.

Timoleon, "that I began writing biographies, but I find myself proceeding and attaching myself to it for my own". Then after a break, he continues: "The virtues of these great men serve me as a looking-glass in which I may see how to adjust and adorn my own life. Indeed it can be compared to nothing but daily living and associating together."

In terms somewhat similar, I say, might the writer of this biography make confession, as indeed, in the words of another, he has already done, that he commenced this task for the sake of others; but he may add with no less truth that he finds himself continuing it for his own, and his reason strongly resembles that given by the older writer, viz: He has fallen in love with his subject! Haply, likewise, it may result in doing him an equal good, because that may yet be found true in his own case which the Gascon, already so copiously quoted herein, in one of his exceedingly entertaining, if egregiously egotistical essays, claims to have happened to himself from his habit of drawing (unconsciously and without meaning to sin) rather flattering pen-portraits of his hero (to-wit: himself) and that "my book may make me as truly as I make my book",\* as I may, peradventure, like the author under discussion, mend my style of living to make the actual *me* more nearly conform to the ideal I have conjured up, and hence become both the reformer and the reformed. "'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished."

Precisely, then, is this the "life and opinions" of the writer, which title, perhaps, does not require that I should go back to the date of his birth (and even far beyond and back of that, if one is to follow the precedent of an entertaining and humorous English author†) but most certainly something of an account of the writer's present opinions,

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\*MONTAIGNE: *Essays*, Book III, Chap. XIX.

†STERNE, in *Tristram Shandy*.

and such a part of his personal history, *anecdotally treated*, perhaps, as will best serve to illustrate these opinions, make them interesting to the reader, and, so far as possible, give them force and authority. Perchance the title of "Confessions", in imitation of the great Genevese, Jean Jacques, and of the English Opium Eater, might have been with propriety selected for the present work, for it is truly intended that it shall give the lie to the very first sentence of the initial chapter of Rousseau's most celebrated production, which declares that the accomplishment of his book "shall have no successful imitator". Yes, it shall also be said of *these* chapters that they have "painted a man in all the integrity of nature".\*

I am gratified to be able to plead good precedent for the method I have pursued in this book, it being none other than that of the gifted author of *Sartor Resartus*, in whose philosophical work we read:

"But why, says the Holfrath, *and indeed say we*, do I dilate on the uses of our Teufeldroeckh's Biography? The great Herr Minister Von Goethe has penetratingly remarked, that 'Man is properly the *only* object that interests man'. Thus I too have noted that in Weisnichtwo our whole conversation is little or nothing else but Biography or Auto-Biography; ever humano-anecdotal (*menschlich-anecdotalische*). Biography is by nature the most universally profitable, universally pleasant of all things: especially Biography of distinguished individuals."

Still a little further to quote this eminent authority in support of my present attempt:

"Of a truth it is the duty of all men, especially of all philosophers,† to record the characteristic circumstances of

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\*ROUSSEAU: *Confessions*, Book I.

†Why it really appears as if the writer of the *S. R.* must have had the author of this book particularly in view when he penned this paragraph, doesn't it?

their education, what furthered, what hindered, what in any way modified it."\*

To all of which matters with my *possible* of care and punctiliousness have I not attended in the present and other chapters of this work?

I fancy that at this point I perceive my reader draw back, and, with a weary yawn, propound the query whether it will pay to persevere and finish the work.

Alas, I know not! Of course it might appear to me that the ensuing chapters (in common, indeed, with those we have passed) are replete with good things, matters which one could not miss without grievous loss to himself; but, reflecting upon Æsop's teaching, that even to apes and crows do their own offspring appear lovely, I hesitate to hazard an opinion here. I feel not at all secure that I shall not be blinded by conceit, and so disqualified from delivering a fair criticism of my own performance. And, further, Montaigne avers that he finds it true that men are, commonly, as wide of the mark in judging of their own works as of those of others,—not only by reason of the kindness they have for them, but for want of capacity to know and distinguish them.† I hold, and here announce, that Sir Thomas More, the gentle author of *Utopia*, notwithstanding his great and acknowledged ingenuousness, in the beginning of the *Apology* exhibits more self-confidence than I dare claim, and, as I do fear, is a self-deceiver.‡

Therefore, dear reader, I repeat, I know not whether to advise you to advance farther, or to retreat with precipitation! How do you stand affected now? How has the perusal of the past chapters repaid you for the time and

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\*S. R. Book II, Chap. II.      †*Essays*, Chapter LXXXI.

‡“Good reader, I stand not so well, I thank God, in my own conceit, and thereby so much in my own light, but that I can with equal judgment, and an even eye, behold both myself and my own.”—SIR THOMAS MORE: *The Apology*.



patience expended upon them? How runs your pulse? What is the general state of your health? Do you keep your appetite?

I might say here, for your encouragement, that I do not think it probable that anything will creep into subsequent chapters which will be much worse than certain matters we have already met; but, on the other hand, I cannot make you a promise, with any degree of certainty of its fulfillment, that aught better than the best we have had will be found. On the whole, then, if at this early hour you are already half-disheartened, it will be better to "stop the procession," and for all time!

What! No? Well, forward then; but from this time on remember that yours is the responsibility and the risk!

I will conclude this chapter with a sublime passage from the *Religio Medici* of Sir Thomas Browne,—a passage which may, with some, justify various positions assumed by the author in the present and some preceding chapters, with certain processes of thought of which they were the fruit in him, while they stir similar trains of reflection in the reader, which may fructify differently; and with others it will make compensation for the lack in interest and solidity which they may have discovered in what has gone before. The erudite doctor discourses as follows:

"The world I regard is myself; it is the microcosm of my own frame that I cast my eye on: for the other I use it, but like my globe, and turn it around sometimes for my recreation. Men that look upon my outside, perusing only my conditions and fortunes, do err in my altitude; for I am above Atlas' shoulders.\* The earth is a point not only in respect of the heavens above us, but of that heavenly and celestial part within us. That mass of flesh which circumscribes me limits not my mind. That surface that tells the

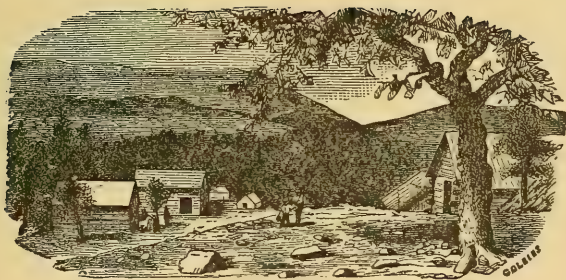
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\*"I, a thing inevitable, and obliged to lead whithersoever it could."—CARLYLE: *Reminiscences, Characteristics of* EDWARD IRVING.

heavens it hath an end, cannot persuade me I have any. I take my circle to be about three hundred and sixty. Though the number of the arc do measure my body, it comprehendeth not my mind. Whilst I study myself to find how I am a microcosm, or little world, I find myself something more than the great. There is surely a piece of divinity in us; something that was before the elements, and owes no homage unto the sun." \*

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\**Rel. Med.*: Part II, S. XI.



## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XXXVII.

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“When there is no recreation or business for thee abroad, thou mayst then have a company of honest old fellows, in leathern jackets, in thy study, which may find thee excellent divertisement at home.

THOMAS FULLER.

‘My library was dukedom large enough.’

SHAKESPEARE: *Tempest*.

“Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.”

BACON.

“Know they the mysteries of nature? nevertheless they write.”

KORAN,



## CHAPTER XXXVII.

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THE writer of those pleasant papers in the little volume entitled *Dreamthorp*, tells us that in his library was a shelf, handy to his usual seat, whereon were ranged those works which it was his delight to read over and over again. Prominent among these, as I was pleased to find, this English author includes our own Hawthorne.\* The list he gives us is not a lengthy one, and it differs in some important respects from one which would include my favorite favorites. The author named above would not be far removed from my elbow it is true. Him I much admire, but I have never yet perused a volume from his pen beyond the second or third time. Not but that many of them are well worth careful study, as they are the work of an artist; but

“Art is long and time is fleeting.”

Yea, life is too short to enable one to express all the juice from the delicious morsels which, even in this prosy and

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\*It may be added that elsewhere in his book MR. SMITH has also professed a partiality for IRVING.

time-worn world, fall to the share of him who is on the lookout for good things! Indeed, like butterflies in a flowery meadow are we book-lovers, or at least many of us, when we find ourselves in a library where a wide choice is possible. From blossom to blossom we flit, scarcely alighting anywhere, delaying only long enough in our wanton flight to sip here nectar, there ambrosia, and desisting not in our delirious pursuit of pleasure until the weary wing droops and tired nature impels to rest.

"I seek in the reading of books only to please myself by an irreproachable diversion," asserts Montaigne, and he has many imitators.

There are certain of the brotherhood, however, who are methodical readers, as they would be methodical book-keepers. Their nerves are regulated as by machinery, and if it is ten o'clock, and ten o'clock is the hour appointed for reading and enjoying Shakespeare, or Shelley, why Shakespeare, or Shelley, must be read, and, I suppose, enjoyed, at the tap of the bell. No vagrant foreign fancy will be tolerated. Milton, although on tolerably good terms with his owner, must keep his place, nor think of intruding upon the hour in the system allotted by the methodical reader to Byron.

This kind of reader I am not. Nine times in ten I enter my library door with little notion of what the feast will be. I cast my eyes lovingly over the shelves, and the various volumes, as they successively meet my gaze, seem to smile blandly out at me through their titles. There stand the Household Poets—for few of my editions are of the costly kinds—how pleasantly they return my "kindly regards"! If I hesitate I am lost, and Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, Holmes, Taylor, or some one of the others will be my companion for the hour, or until my changing mood directs me to another store of sweets.

But possibly I greet these, and, not meaning to slight them, but from a politeness which is habitual with me under these circumstances, I allow my eyes to wander by way of recog-



dition to the features of some of my other darlings,—and my first love is forgotten in a new fancy. Now, perchance, it is Dickens, or Eliot, that wins my favor. In this vagabond, but immensely pleasant way, do I make my choice of a companion upon the occasion of one of these “excursions”.

Now I know that this is wholly wrong, and a very unprofitable method (if method that can be called where method there is none), and one that will meet the disapproval of all judicious persons. I was taught better than this, and when I behave in this reprehensible and vagrant manner it is in despite of, and in opposition to, many most excellent lectures delivered to me by several of the best and best qualified men in the world.

Ah, I fancy I can see an amused smile—followed soon by a troubled expression—overspreading the kind, worn face of President ———, of ——— College, as he reads this chapter! And there is Prof. ———, and Rev. ———. Kind men! Worthy preceptors! How like seed sown on barren ground was the counsel you erstwhile so patiently and in such loving—and lovable—spirit gave!

In justice to myself, however, I must insist that I do labor in these realms, at times, methodically, faithfully, and in pursuance of previously well digested plans. I burrow in history; I glean in biography; I pursue some phantom in poetry, or prose-fiction; or I seek to clear up a question in some branch of natural history, or in mythology. Then, my very noble and approved good masters, *then*, if you could see me would you commend me, and say (perhaps): “I always thought there was *stuff* in the boy, and that he would prove it some day!” But it will not do to gaze long at a time, gentlemen, for these heroic spells are not of very extended duration, and the ruling passion is sure to assert itself.

Now, had I a “favorite shelf” in my study, *a la* Alexander Smith, do you know what volumes would occupy

the post of honor on that shelf — the chief of the favorites? Sir Thomas Browne's quaint and learned tomes! Ah, there is poetry,\* and pith, and pleasantry, and pathos, in these old books. There is deep thought, profound learning, most serious, earnest feeling! No productions of any other single uninspired writer could fill their place!

I do not know but I shall be thought eccentric in the above; but let me be not misunderstood. Let it not be supposed that I am a man of a single book, and would willingly be confined even to Dr. Browne,—excellent and nutritious as is the mental aliment which he affords. I go thus far: I can read these chapters over, and over again and they seldom tire me or pall on my taste; and I know few if any other compositions in prose or poetry of which I can say so much. Shakespeare, of course, is infinite; and I shall loose cast with many for preferring to him any other writer whatever. But I had thought of him e'er I penned

\*“Poetry!” one exclaims; “surely Sir Thomas Browne never wrote poetry!”

*Technically*, no; but many of his deep, musical, thoughtful passages are of the very essence of poetry. Emerson testifies that “It would not be easy to refuse to \* \* \* the *Fragment on Mummies* the claim of poetry. And so say we all. And he quotes the following paragraph in exemplification:

“Of their living habitations they made little account, conceiving of them but as *hospitia*, while they adorned the sepulchres of the dead, and, planting thereon lasting bases, defied the crumbling touches of time, and the misty vaporiousness of oblivion. Yet all were but Babel vanities. Time sadly overcometh all things, and is now dominant, and sitteth upon a Sphinx, and looketh unto Memphis and old Thebes, while his sister Oblivion reclineth semi-somnolent on a pyramid, gloriously triumphing, making puzzles of Titanian erections, and turning old glories into dreams. History sinketh beneath her cloud. The traveler as he paceth through those deserts asketh of her, Who builded them? and she mumblenth something, but he heareth it not.”

No poetry in Sir Thomas Browne's books! Ah, my friend, you have read them little, or to little purpose!

the paragraph which precedes this, and now feel no desire to modify what is down.

Speaking of Sir Thomas, I'll tell you of a little affair which occurred while I was engaged in reading his delicious pages. I had set out with the determination of copying into my common-place book his best passages, and what do you think I did? Why, when I had proceeded through a few chapters of the *Christian Morals* (of which, by the way, some have professed to question the authorship, but have only shown their total want of taste and discrimination thereby) I found that I had written off nearly one-half of what I had passed over! And even then I had left uncopied many things I wanted. Nor is the work I have instanced in anything superior to his other and more celebrated writings. That is Sir Thomas Browne! an author now singularly much neglected, but worthy of the careful study of every intelligent person in the land.

Along-side the volumes mentioned I should surely set up the works of England's "myriad-minded," and close to him would come Emerson I think, prose and verse, Bacon's *Essays*, Milton, Sterne, and not far off would stand Montaigne's inimitable works as translated by Hazlitt, Wordsworth, Burns, Cowper's poems and letters, and it would be handy to have Emerson's *Parnassus* there.

We will suppose that these gentry occupy the centre upon the shelf, and come nearest my elbow. On either flank would be found a number of authors whose names I am disposed to write in a round-robin. All are admirable and favorite: some for one quality, some for another: and all fail at particular points. To my taste they are not *equal* — that's the term the critics would here employ. And then it would be difficult to make comparisons, or to set one before another, when one is a philosophical treatise, one a volume of poetry, another a novel, a fourth a book of essays, etc. Some of Irving's writings would assuredly be

admitted into the ranks; Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*, and, haply, the *House of Seven Gables*, and one or two others; Eliot's *Adam Bede*, etc.; *Pickwick*; *Tennyson*, and *Byron*, and some six or seven of the American songsters; the *Anatomy of Melancholy*; and —— a whole host of others! Some things of Carlyle's, Coleridge's, De Quincey's, Scott's, John Wilson's, ought to be within easy reach, or else I should be obliged to quit my study chair very frequently. And what of *Pope*, *Dryden*, Bryant's *Homer*, Longfellow's *Danté*, Taylor's *Faust*, and a hundred other old friends? And how many, many "good friends, sweet friends" is the press supplying us daily!

This is a book-making age!

That is what the doctors say without disagreement. I read the assertion in the newspapers, magazines, and reviews; I hear it from the lecture stand and in learned conversation; I have lately run across the statement in the prefaces of three different books by three different authors, in my little library. I desire to add my testimony to that of others; and even though I believe it to be an act of supererogation, I have a mind to set to work to prove the preposition,—I have, by the shades of Epicurus and Friar Bacon! And wherefore? Because I like to be on the right side of a question; I like to *know* I am upon the right side; and then I like to heap up arguments on that side. The motive is in this: It is difficult in most cases to be sure that your proposition will stand all assaults of the great reasoners,—and the cobweb arguments in favor of the questions which I, in past time, have set out to prove, how have I beheld them, scorched and shrivelled in the glowing heat of the rhetoric, or reduced to an impalpable powder beneath the tremendous blows of the sledge-hammer-like logic of a well-equipped opponent, borrow the wings of a zephyr and disappear into the abyss of nonentity! Like Cowper,

"I hate

A duel in the form of a debate."

while, like most persons, I dearly love to argue. But whenever I find myself opposed, "nose to nose," as the poet has it, by an argumentatively-twisted face, my peace of mind is disturbed, and for fear that there may be something wrong in my position, I often forget the chain of reasoning where-with I had intended to sustain it, and surrender without striking a blow. I belong not to the same class as the schoolmaster of Auburn, of whom it was affirmed that

"Even though vanquished he could argue still";

Nor to that of Carleton's *Uncle Sammy*, for rarely indeed do I stand to test my adversary. I have a horror of a terrible polemical visage!

Therefore is it, friends, that I most delight in proving universally-admitted facts. I feel secure that no champion of the reverse of the question will appear to take up the gage of battle which I so defiantly throw down, and with a calm consciousness of my own strength and that of my cause, I lay down my premises, draw my conclusions, elaborate my rhetoric, and proceed with a triumphant flourish to the Q. E. D.

It is a pleasant and a harmless diversion; it stirs up no bad blood; and for all practical purposes it is equally useful with most disputations, "which are also a vanity and vexation of spirit".

I will not take the reader's time for the present, however, to argue about the proposition with which I began this discussion. I propose to prove it in a more practical way e'er I am done with the reading public; and in the meantime I have a few more propositions of a similar character which I wish to announce: The age immediately preceding the present was a book-making affair; likewise the age next before that; and, moreover, that which went ahead still. And so were they all,—all book-making ages, away back for hundreds and thousands of years. If one may be allowed a fair inference from a remark of the Wisest Man, even Solo-



mon's age was a book-making one. Yea, "there is no end of making many books".

It is little to be wondered at. Book-making is a very agreeable pastime, and in these later ages, it is a cheap one.

"'Tis pleasant sure to see one's name in print".

And, considering that so many are and have been indulging in this diversion, *while brains are so scarce*, it is no wonder either that Byron should feel justified in the ironical touch with which he closed his couplet:

"A book's a book, although there's nothing in't."

But so it is, books do not live. Most books that are produced have within them at their birth the seeds of death, and bear upon their brows the mark of mortality.\* The race with them is short: they belong to the order *Ephemeridæ*. "He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not."†

Some have foolishly complained of it as a hardship that the infinite press doth so spawn its brood upon the country every year and every day, not pausing even to observe the Sabbath. Poetry and prose fiction, histories, biographies, chemistries, natural histories, treatises on every branch of human erudition, critical works, text books, guide books, fables &c., &c., almost *ad infinitum*, are we deluged with continually. "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge".‡

Foolishly, I say, do men thus complain; and wherefore not? All tastes are to be answered. And is any man to

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\*In his interesting *Reminiscences*, CARLYLE makes the statement that there is not a book in a million that will endure as long as a well-constructed house. He deemed it possible, therefore, that his much revered father, whom he represents to have been a mason or house builder, and a very patient and faithful workman, might have reared more lasting monuments than had he with all his labor and all his thought.

†*Job*, XIV; 2.

‡*Psalms*, XIX; 2.

read all? God forbid! Why, but last year the busy press of the world threw of more new literature than the longest life, and the best pair off eyes in the world (not to hint at any possible assault upon the stomach), would enable one to skim over. More is there to-day, good literature, or at least fairly well worth reading, native to the English tongue, than any ordinary man, hampered with this temporal, eternal necessity connected with the bread and butter question, can read and digest during his span. What a world of good things are now accessible through English translations — the avenue, no matter what is said, or what pretended, to the contrary, whereby most of us have approached and will continue to approach the great literary works first composed in ancient or alien languages. Then our scholars are busy exhuming old literatures (which somehow *have* been preserved, albeit in a sort of life-in-death; but which compose, probably, not a single one hundredth of what was written in these tongues) which have been buried for thousands of years. Extensive and rich beyond all previous conception of them, have some of these proved to be. A long lifetime's work for a rapid reader in each of several of them. "It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."\*

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\**Job* XI; 8, 9.



## MOTTOES FOR CHAPTER XXXVIII.



“And what, for this frail world, were all  
That mortals do or suffer,  
Did no responsive harp, no pen,  
Memorial tribute offer?  
Yea, what were mighty Nature’s self?  
Her features, could they win us,  
Unhelped by the poetic vein  
That hourly speaks within us?”

WORDSWORTH.

“Where’er the oak’s thick branches stretch  
A broader, browner shade,  
Where’er the rude and moss-grown beech  
O’er-canopies the glade,  
Beside some water’s rushy brink,  
With me the muse shall sit and think,  
(At ease reclined in rustic state!)  
How vain the ardor of the crowd!  
How low, how little are the proud!  
How indigent the great!

GRAY: *Ode to the Spring.*

“There I was living a quiet life in the country;  
Shaved once a week, may be, wore my old clothes,  
Full of my sheep, and goats, and bees, and vineyards.”

ARISTOPHANES: *The Clouds.*



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IN the *Recollections of a Busy Life* by the great and good man who founded the *New York Tribune*, I read this record :

“‘You will be sick of living in the country within two years’, I was confidently told when I bought, ‘and your place will be advertised for sale’. ‘Then the sheriff’s name will be at the bottom of the advertisement,’ I responded.”

Alas! Greeley’s great heart has ceased to beat! the owner of Chappaqua has been dead and gone this dozen of years, and during the spring of 1883 I observed in a newspaper a notice of the sale of the farm at auction! So much for the futility of human hopes — the vanity of human wishes!

But, what then? The issue fated to be such, had not the white-coated philosopher done well to give his over-worked mind and body the recreation his beloved woody, rocky and swampy farm afforded? Ah, happy had it been for him, and the saddest page of the noble, philanthropic, if eccentric, Greeley’s biography had remained unwritten could he have withdrawn from political strife ere the fatal cam-

paing of '72, and been content to pass the remainder of his days in the peaceful pursuits of agriculture and literature, sequestered in the rural retreat which he so loved! In contrast with the lurid lights of that political struggle, which for him and his ended so tragically, how sweet, how lovely appears the dove-color of this pastoral seclusion! I repeat:

“How sacred, and how innocent  
A country-life appears!  
How free from tumult, discontent  
From flattery, or fears!”

No doubt can exist that of the hours of the last quarter of Horace Greeley's existence, those most abounding in freedom from care, yea, in pure, unmixed joy — for he was still capable of such emotion — were spent solitarily, or in company with his workmen, or some friend, or relative, in rustic enterprises at Chappaqua!

“How bland and sweet the greeting of the breeze  
To him who flies  
From crowded street and red wall's weary gleam,  
Till far behind him, like a hideous dream,  
The close, dark city lies.

“Once more let God's green earth and sunset air  
Old feelings waken;  
Through weary years of toil, and strife, and ill,  
O let me feel that my good angel still  
Has not his trust forsaken!”\*

“Who knows”, says Emerson, speaking of the farm, “how many glances of remorse are turned this way from the bankrupts of trade, from mortified pleaders in courts and senates, or from the victims of idleness or pleasure?”†

Alas! who knows?

I rejoice that Greeley found, during his later years, that wholesome enjoyment which nothing else but his farm could have yielded, while I deplore the cruel fate — the sor-

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\*WHITTIER: *Chalkley Hall*.

†*Essays: The Farmer*.



rowful close of his earthly career — which prevented him from passing a long pleasant evening of life amid the rural and sylvan scenes he had loved so well. How peaceful, how idyllic, how happy there and thus might have been the last years of this venerable man!

“How blest is he who crowns, in shades like these,  
A youth of labor with an age of ease!  
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,  
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!”\*

But dismissing that portion of the subject, I begin now to draw some outline sketches of my own pleasant environments and experiences at Oakfields.

I deem that in the work hinted at in the last paragraph I am doing the world a real service, while, at the same time, I *know* I am indulging myself in a darling pleasure!

It must be a service to mankind in general to point out thereto a way whereby it may at a cheap rate possess perfect happiness here below, such as I possess, and live at the same time so innocently, and so usefully, as not to risk the loss of blessedness in the life to come! I will not undertake to say, however, that every person is “sufficient for all this”. Nay, I fear there are very many who will consider a life like that we lead here both insipid and unprofitable. Lowell says:

“What we call nature, all outside ourselves,  
Is but our own conceit of what we see,—  
Our own reaction upon what we feel.”

Sir Thomas Browne holds the same doctrine, and thus enunciates it: “We carry within us the wonders we find without.”

It is little to be expected, then, that everything I see and enjoy in my sweet fields, green lanes, and generous-

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\*GOLDSMITH: *Deserted Village*.

bosomed woodlands could be perceived and so enjoyed by *Tom, Dick and Harry*. It is Thoreau who declares:

"The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere."

And that wonderful woman, George Eliot, impatiently demands:

"How should all the apparatus of heaven and earth, from the farthest firmament to the tender bosom of the mother who nourished us, make poetry for a mind that has no movement of awe and tenderness, no sense of fellowship which thrills from the near to the distant, and back again from the distant to the near?"\*

And yet, even *T. D.* and *H.* may, possibly, discover *more* in nature hereafter than they have been accustomed to see,—may perceive more, or more clearly

"The unsung beauty hid life's common things among,"†

if I and the other poets and philosophers shall succeed in interesting them to the extent of inducing them to *look closer*, and with more loving hearts.

But, in reflecting upon my own part, I am reminded, also, of some thoughtful words of a late writer:

"It ought to be [done] at all events with austere candor and avoidance of anything which I can suspect of being untrue. Perhaps nobody but myself will read this—but that is not infallibly certain—and even in regard to myself, the one possible profit of such a thing is that it be not false or incorrect in any point, but correspond to the fact in all."‡

But this precaution (to speak soberly) I have observed in all my course hitherto, and that single circumstance it is which

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\**Daniel Deronda*.

†WHITTIER: *Dedication to Songs of Labor*.

‡CARLYLE: *Reminiscences, Appendix*.

has contributed very greatly to make this the most veracious of all the books the world has welcomed since the appearance of *Knickerbocker's New York* astonished and delighted it! and, as nothing can be truer than truth, the reader will discern in my future course in this field little in this regard that differs even infinitesimally from my conduct in the past. Hence the public—if it read—and myself in any event, will reap herefrom whatever advantage TRUTH—whether in a pleasing garb or otherwise, according as I shall be able to deck her out—may afford.

But, to return and dwell a moment longer upon the subject started of the differing aspects of a scene or object when viewed by different persons, or by the same person under diverse circumstances. Says that erudite Serbonde (whoever he might have been), of whom and whose thought Montaigne speaks in one of his most delightful and instructive essays:

“The object we love will appear to us more beautiful than it really is, and that we hate more ugly. To an afflicted man the light of the day seems dark. Our senses are not wholly depraved, but stupified by the passions of the soul. How many things do we see that we do not take notice of. If the mind be taken up with other thoughts it appears that the soul retires within and amuses [herself with] the powers of the senses. And so both the inside and outside of man is full of infirmities and mistakes. They who have compared our life to a dream were peradventure more in the right than they were aware of.”\*

And much more to the same purpose.

Touching this subject also, Sterne has to say:

“The learned *Smelfungus*† traveled from Boulogne to Paris, from Paris to Rome—and so on,—but he set out with the

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\*MONTAIGNE's *Essays*, COTTON's Trans.

†Thus in *The Sentimental Journey* the gifted author satirizes the novelist SMOLLETT, who once wrote a lugubrious volume of travels.

spleen and jaundice, and every object he passed by was discolored or distorted. He wrote an account of them; but it was only an account of his own miserable feelings."

Picture to yourself, reader, the companion you would now have, had the author of the present work set out upon his travels *over his farm* at a time when his soul was afflicted with the same doleful humors that possessed the learned *S.* during his continental tour!

I can heartily agree with the last author, also, when he says: "I pity the man who can travel from Dan to Beer-sheba, and cry, 'Tis barren!—and so it is; and so is all the world to him who will not cultivate the fruits it offers."

I would also commend for its good sense what follows from the same source:

"What a large volume of adventures may be grasped within the little span of life by him who interests his heart in everything, and who, having eyes, sees what time and chance are perpetually holding out to him as he journeyeth on his way, and misses nothing he can fairly lay his hands on."

To what purpose all this but to impress the reader with a sense of the importance of making an effort to give unprejudiced heed—or, rather, of throwing himself into the mental attitude which will best fit him to enjoy—what follows, while it serves as a sort of introduction to a long epistle addressed by the author, some months since, to two bright young friends of his, brother and sister, who, having determined upon leading professional lives, were even at that date resident at an illustrious institution of learning, and engaged in a noble struggle for the mastery of those branches of physical science which serve as the basis of the noble profession of their choice. The letter is introduced here with the apologetic word merely that it covers the ground I wished to cover, and answers every designed purpose of the present chapter better, perhaps, than any new thing I should be able to compose would perform these offices.

OAKFIELDS, June 10, 188-.

*To my learned Doctors, L. and F.—Greeting:*

I have determined, my dear children, to compose for you a fragmentary idyl this evening, to-wit: To tell you precisely what we have done at Oakfields, this bright and beautiful June day.

I arose early, for I had predetermined to forestall the “powerful king of Day”, this delicious morning prophesied of and foretold to turn out as it proved by an evening of wonderful and star-eyed beauty! And I found on emerging from the eastern door that the first herald-streamers of colored light were flashing athwart the low-hung clouds of the sweet, cool east;—

“The clouds,  
Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;  
And in the meadows, and the lower grounds,  
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn —  
Dews, vapors, and the melody of birds.”\*

As I stood gazing, the fields and forests were vocal, and I experienced to the full extent the significance of Willis’ words:

“One gets sensitive about losing mornings after getting a little used to them by living in the country. Each one of these endlessly varied day-breaks is an opera, but once performed.”

And never more forcibly did I feel the truth of what the great Milton once said:

“In these vernal seasons of the year when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against nature not to go out and see her riches, and partake in their rejoicings with heaven and earth.”

You will smile, my children, as you have often before smiled, at my persistent, yea, dogged enthusiasm when the

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\*WORDSWORTH: *Excursion*.



subjects of the country, farms, country houses, or country living, were under discussion, be the time and place whatsoever they will; but I'll e'en take my revenge by reminding you of the saying of the philosopher Alcott:

"There is a virtue in country houses, in gardens and orchards, in fields, streams and groves, in *rustic recreations* and plain manners that *neither* cities nor universities enjoy."

Also, of what doctrine Menander inculcated:

"Men are taught virtue and a love of independence by living in the country."

And Ruffini:

"If country life be healthful to the body it is no less so to the mind."

But enough; for while I am recalling what certain of my friends have said to justify what others of them have been pleased to denominate my indiosyncrasy, I find that in order to "preserve the unities", it is high time to record the fact that the gentle sharer of my rural life is astir and abroad among the bees upon the still dew-bejeweled lawn, even while I stand and gaze and wonder at the panorama of the heavens, and she murmurs no less sweetly in her glad greeting to her innumerable pets in response to their matin music.

Oh what is so rare as a day in June!"

We must away, Malvina and I, nor wait for breakfast — 'tis the covenant between us of the foregoing day, as we returned from our late walk by the woodside in the twilight — for the forest hath treasures at these early hours that you lazy citizens and students know not of, and scarcely are willing to credit the existence of when we poets sing them in melodious verse, or only less musical prose.

"Gifted bards

Have ever loved the calm and quiet shades"

of the sweet woodlands at rosy morn and dewy eve.

Then it is away for the forests and wild meadows, where

last evening we wandered happier and as innocent as Adam and Eve in Paradise, ere the fall, and had Browning's picture brought to mind by our own gentle flock :

“The solitary pastures, where the sheep,  
Half asleep,  
Tinkle homeward through the twilight, stray or stop,  
As they crop.”

Is it away, then, and wait not to break our fast? or shall we pause long enough to quaff a bowl of this rich and wholesome milk now just brought in from the farm-yard by the good genii who haunt that realm, and whose rising this bright, blessed morn after all did antedate ours and old Sol's, notwithstanding, too, I had been indulging a little vanity anent my achievement in early hours and opportunities. Who hesitates is lost! and we enjoy a draught — ah, such a draught!

“Not a full-blushing goblet could tempt me to leave it,  
Though filled with the nectar that Jupiter sips!”\*

Now, with substantial foot-gear all equipped, are we off! Now, we are in the shadow of the greenwood, and, as also we experienced last evening, beside the jocund birds,

“Snout of fly, mosquito's bill,  
And kin of all descriptions,  
Frog in grass, and cricket's trill,  
These are our musicians.”†

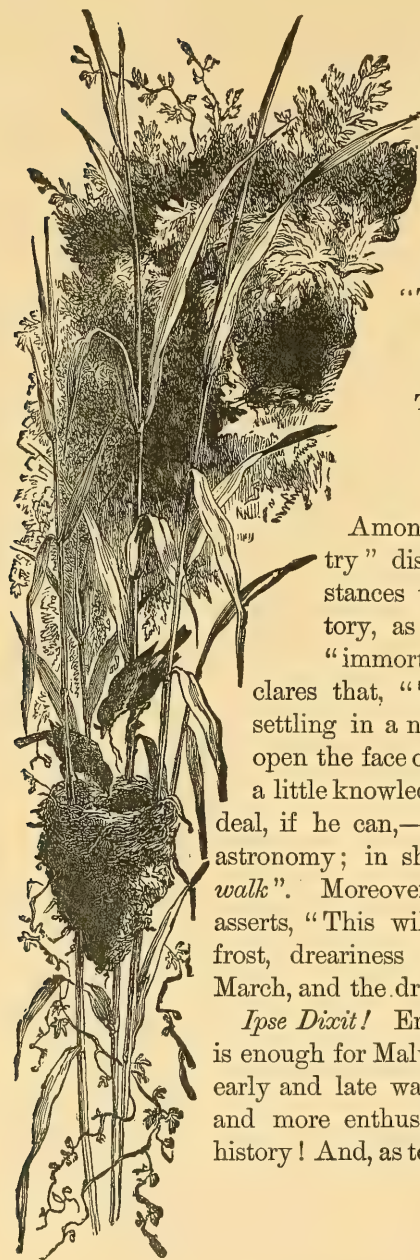
Troublesome, too, would prove some of the musical Gypsies to less earnest and enthusiastic ramblers than those whose fortunes we follow, — not to them!

How fresh and sweet the breath of the morn in this covert, and what a bewilderingly delightful emotion fills the breast as one begins to feel — as anon he can not help feeling — that the trees are tremulously conscious of his presence,

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\**The Old Oaken Bucket.*

†*Faust*, TAYLOR'S Translation.



and sigh, and murmur  
with pleased good will,  
while the sweet wild  
flowers look up into his  
eyes and smile. There  
are besides the great poet  
who can say and say  
truthfully :

“Thanks to the human heart by  
which we live,  
Thanks to its tenderness, its  
joys and fears,  
To me the meanest flower that  
blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie  
too deep for tears.”

Among “resources for the country” discovered, Emerson instances the study of natural history, as “most attractive”, and “immortal”. He further declares that, “The first care of a man settling in a new country, should be to open the face of the earth to himself, by a little knowledge of nature,—or a great deal, if he can,—of birds, rocks, plants, astronomy; in short, the art of *taking a walk*”. Moreover, he continues and truly asserts, “This will draw the sting out of frost, dreariness out of November and March, and the drowsiness out of August”.

*Ipsa Dixit!* Emerson said it! But that is enough for Malvina and I. Hence these early and late walks; hence our renewed and more enthusiastic pursuit of natural history! And, as to this last, witness results:

Item 1st, one (1) enormous black spider, captured by Malvina on the *Ampelopsis quinque-folia* that overruns to its ornamentation all the eastern side of the south wing of the farm-house, and which—the spider and not the vine—is now afloat in (high) spirits in a wide-throated bottle which stands upon a shelf in my study; item 2d, a small green snake, caught by the same daring hand (protected by the ample folds of my large silk handkerchief, borrowed for the purpose), and since—the snake and not the hand—condemned to remain fast in the fires of an alcoholic bath, also, in a second bottle, similar and similarly situated to the former.

On my part, I have birds eggs, a cabinet of bright-colored lepidopterous insects, a collection of wild grasses, the product of the farm, dried specimens of other plants, and an accumulation of text books. And I know where there are the ruins of an eagle's nest, superincumbent upon the dry limbs of a dead-and-alive pine tree, down back of the fort, and a little north of the *Druid's Temple*. And didn't I see—and long and closely did I watch him!—a golden eagle one bright day as he sat high-perched upon a tall, slender oak tree not far south of the ruins? He appeared conscious of my regards, too, and, perhaps, a little proud to attract such attention. He sometimes shifted his position, a little uneasily, I thought, then he would spread his magnificent wings, and deliberately dropping into the air, gracefully swim, describing a few narrow circles, and again resume his perch. What sought he with those piercing, peerless eyes, and found it not? I could not divine, though long I tried. But finally the monotony of this pastime seemed to weary his kingship, and of a sudden he uttered a wild shriek of baffled rage, or, perhaps, of exultation (who shall interpret?), launched himself gallantly far out into the blue air, careered about a moment or two, then with a noble sweep of his grand pinions he passed swiftly westward over toward the sluggish Sturgeon (lying like a half-dead serpent beyond the tall dry pines on that side) and vanished from view.

I never saw this fine bird alive again; but a young lad from the county-seat, armed with a murderous fowling-piece, passed up the Sturgeon one day, a short time after, and when he returned he bore with him the mangled body of a fine eagle of this species, which he had shot, then clubbed with the butt of his gun, and succeeded in killing, not, however, without a severe struggle and himself receiving certain wounds. The battle was fought near the point where my elegant bird, in the glorious flight I have here described, had crossed the course of the stream, and I doubt not that my bird it was which a lamentable fate thus overtook.

I remember an amusing thing (at this distance) which occurred to the writer while he was observing the eagle as narrated above. I stood upon a decayed and mossy log while I marked the gyrations of my noble bird, and for a few moments I was oblivious of earth and self; my soul was an eaglet, and emulating the glorious aerial achievements of the plumed king "cleaving the sky" above me. All-suddenly were more terrestrial things recalled; for, my footing giving way, I slipped sheer off my pedestal, and rolled quite noiselessly, and altogether as helplessly, into a bed of blackberry brambles. Chagrined, yea, wounded both in body and spirit, I yet could not help giggling a little to myself at the contrast betwixt my fine day-dream and the waking reality, and I heartily gratulated myself, withal, that nobody was near enough to see my ridiculous plight. I thought of the anecdote of the ancient star-gazing philosopher in the ditch, and the advice of the old woman who assisted him to get out: "For the future, Thales," quoth she, "don't have your head among the stars while your feet are on the earth."

But back returning from our tramp as the blue day grows bluer, and older, and warmer, we lade ourselves with brilliant-hued and fragrant wild blossoms, which at this season convert our sylvan earth-fields into heavenly places, and pause as we pass through close-cropped, green-carpeted

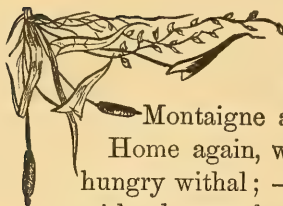


lanes, dandelion-dotted, to caress innocent-faced lambs, admire incipient geese, and other farm-yard broods.

How wonderful is it that the young of all animals are interesting, and of most — a certain stage of development reached — are beautiful? An elderly goose may be respectable, at least, and all that; but no one is so rash as to call her “fine”. There is little in a full-grown, grunting hog that is “nice”, respectable, or, indeed, tolerable. But a plump, two-week’s-old, white, or even spotted, pig is both “cute” and pretty, and he will command the admiration of quite fastidious ladies who pause to observe him. Who ever saw a baby that wasn’t “just the sweetest little thing in the world”? Even a cleanly Chippewa pappoose, or a diamond-eyed African cherub, is not utterly uninteresting, or devoid of charms — although I believe I — never felt an irresistible impulse to kiss one of either sort.

What had we seen and done in the woods?

We had visited that singular group of four fine young oaks, standing on the hither side of the water-channel in the beaver-meadow, and well up to the north line of our first section,—four thrifty young oaks, quadruplets, standing some ten or twelve feet asunder, and so regularly planted that they have at the base all the appearance of having been set for the corner posts of a building,—this is the Druid’s Temple. Thence we had wandered by cow-path through the dense covert to the northward — our most compact body of forest — as far north as that beautiful little meadow on our farthest lot, known as the upper beaver-meadow, admiring the festooning vines of the grape, bitter-sweet, and Virginia creeper which abound hereabout, plucking flowers, and breathing in the wholesome breath of the sweet woods. We had seen many small birds, a scarlet tanager, a cuckoo, and away above us in the illimitable blue, a fish-hawk lazily sailing in wide circles. Could he see us? Doubtless; but we interested him not,—nay,



were of less consequence to him—  
how much soever we esteemed our-  
selves—than he to us. Think of

Montaigne and his cat!

Home again, warm, a little fatigued in body, and  
hungry withal; — but with mind and heart refreshed  
with what a refreshment!

We lunch: Some ice-cold milk (upon which the cream  
has been accumulating since early morn) from the refrigera-  
tor in the cool, clean, airy cellar; bread, white and light and  
sweet; and — ye gods! this *is* a surprise! prepared for me  
against this hour at blessed morn ere our setting out by  
Malvina — pure honey in the whitest and most fragrant of  
sweet, colorless comb! the first fruits of our hives!

Now, pursuant to appointment, must I hold a consulta-  
tion upon field affairs with thee, thou iron-jawed, grim, yet  
kind-visaged veteran of two bloody wars, General Allen!  
A man he, who, every inch a soldier, knows both to com-  
mand and to obey! Long years hath he served me here  
faithfully, until to himself, as to me, his tenure here  
seemeth as good as, and almost of the same nature as  
mine!

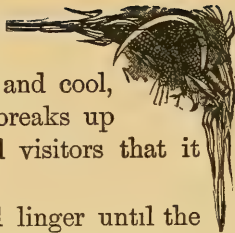


An excursion now it is into my library, and several  
hours of deepest content are passed solitarily — and  
yet in such company is it, how dare I say solita-  
rily! — rather in the delightful companionship of  
my many friends *in cloth and leathern jackets*.

A tour of inspection through the mead-  
ows, grain fields and gardens in the after-  
noon, later is succeeded by a drive out  
to and away northward upon the “state  
road”—Malvina and I in company.

After an early tea we entertain  
certain friends who have  
driven out from  
the village — ours  
being a very pleas-

ant and very *informal* and *unconventional* lawn and veranda party, where, for refreshment, honey is tasted again, and cool, delicious milk is drunk. The party breaks up when the setting sun warns our kind visitors that it is time to turn homeward.



In the twilight we of the household linger until the moonless summer eve grows dark, for a haze obscures the sweet stars, and, one by one, our tired helpers drop off to their grateful couches. Last of all, with a pleasant injunction to me not to write too long to-night, and her sweet good-night kiss, Malvina goes

“And leaves the world to darkness and to me!”

The “glimmering landscape” had already “faded on the sight”,

“And all the air a solemn stillness holds,  
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,  
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds.”

I sit in my little lumbered-up study, the northern and eastern windows of which are open, and through these from where I sit at my slight round table, can I view the dark-domed heavens. I work, or play, thus by a lamp all too dim and eke inclined to waver as it feels that same gentle breeze which sighs so softly and so sweetly through the leaves of the trees standing close by the veranda on either front, and brings in the fragrance of the new clover and the June roses.

But the evening has been consumed since I began this letter,

“’Tis midnight’s holy hour, and silence now  
Is brooding like a gentle spirit o’er  
The still and pulseless world!”

It is time my vigil should close — only a word or two more and I am done.

"Tired of the country?" "Sick of solitude?" Never, never, never!

Oh, the wholesome influences and delightful opportunities of this sequestration! Often in contemplation, in this same little room, a sense of the cleanliness and simple beauty of this rural life—peaceful seclusion—this solitude, will steal over my spirit as sweetly and as fragrantly as upon the weary traveler, who has seated himself on a mossy rock beneath a wayside tree, breathes the "south-west wind, which comes creeping over flowery fields and shadowed water in the extreme heat of summer".\*

Emerson declares,

"We flee away from cities, but we bring  
The best of cities with us."†

The world must frown upon this doctrine, and this is why we turn our backs upon the world! Were society less sordid or frivolous, were the world less self-interested, they were less harsh toward us recluses,—they were more innocent, and more just.

Says Irving:

"In rural occupation there is nothing mean and debasing. It leads a man forth among scenes of natural grandeur and beauty; it leaves him to the workings of his own mind, operated upon by the purest, and most elevating of external influences."‡

"Here innocence may wander safe from foes,  
And contemplation soar on seraph wings;—  
Oh, solitude! the man who thee foregoes,  
Where lucre leads him, or ambition stings,  
Shall never know the source whence real grandeur springs."§

Of his retirement at Lenox Beecher wrote:

"Here then for a few weeks we shall forget the city and

\*SIR PHILIP SYDNEY, in *Arcadia*. †*The Adirondacks*.

‡*Sketch Book*. §BEATTIE: *The Minstrel*.

lay aside its excitements, and bathe with a perpetual lavation in the bright, cool air.

“When one is young, and not yet entered on life, the heart pants for new things and for excitements. But after one has taken the burden of life upon his back, and lived amid cares that never rest, but beat upon the shore like an unquiet surf, then nothing is so luxurious as the calm of a country neighborhood.

“Nor is the only experience that of pleasure. There is ample space for retrospection, a mental state which is almost denied to public men in the life of a city. No man in a city parish, driven by new demands each hour, has leisure to go a-gleaning over harvested fields. He must plow again, sow again, reap again. But now, at this distance, and separated from all daily solicitation, one can review the whole year; and if done with any worthy standard, it cannot fail to furnish food for the most earnest reflection, and for the most solemn resolutions for the future.”\*

“Fair Quiet, have I found you here,  
And Innocence, thy sister dear;  
Mistaken long, I sought you then  
In busy companies of men;  
Your sacred plant, if here below,  
Only among the plants will grow;  
Society is all but rude,  
To this delicious solitude!”†

But the testimony is too voluminous — the subject infinite ! You are yet too young, my children, to need such deep, sweet repose; but you will sometime understand all this, for your spirits are also serious and sweet,—and may you cultivate them and keep them so. Society is good; universities are good; but these are preliminary merely in the education of the largest souled ones of earth.

Now I see from a loop-hole of my retreat the first faint

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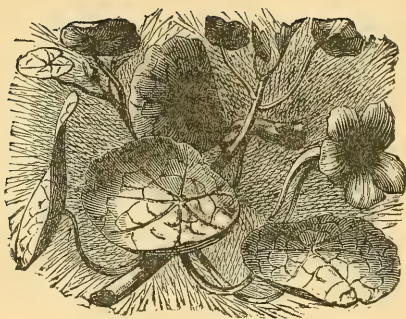
\**Star Papers.*

†MARVELL.



light in the east which warns of the waning night, as it betokens the approach of the new day. It is late enough certainly to bid you good night, and early enough to wish you good morning; hence I say GOOD NIGHT and GOOD MORNING.

THE END



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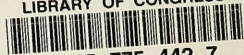
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